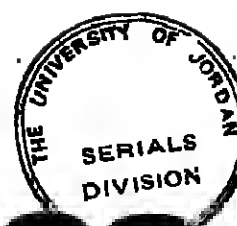


Kurdish rebels free Turkish soldiers

ANKARA (R) — Eight Turkish soldiers held captive by separatist Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) guerrillas in northern Iraq were repatriated Saturday, local officials said. Seven of the soldiers had been abducted last Aug. 4 by the rebels, who raided an army post on the Turkish-Iraqi border and killed 10 other soldiers. It was not clear when the eighth soldier was captured. The raid prompted a week-long Turkish military operation against PKK bases across the border. Officials said the freed soldiers were handed over at the Habur border point to a representative of Turkish President Turgut Ozal and Siamand Banas, an envoy for the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) of Iraq. The Iraqi Kurds are in contact with Turkish Kurdish guerrillas, although they are not allied. The PKK said it would release the hostages earlier this month, but changed its mind after Ankara refused to agree to a formal ceremony with U.N. observers. Turkish officials have repeatedly refused to negotiate with the PKK, which has been fighting a guerrilla war since 1984 in southeastern Turkey where half of the country's 12 million Kurds are concentrated. Over 3,000 soldiers, civilians and rebels have died in the fighting so far. Another PKK raid earlier in October killed 11 other soldiers, prompting new strikes by Turkish jets in northern Iraq last week.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالإنجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية "الراي"



Israelis round up Muslim fundamentalists

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel rounded up dozens of activists of the Muslim fundamentalist group Hamas, including its deputy leader, Arab reporters said Saturday. The move apparently was aimed at preventing guerrilla attacks that could threaten Middle East peace talks. Hamas staunchly opposes the talks as a sellout. The sweep began late Friday in the occupied Gaza Strip, and troops detained several dozen Hamas activists, Arab reports said. Among those arrested was Ibrahim Yezouri, 55, the deputy leader of Hamas in Gaza, the reports said. The sweep started hours after U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and Soviet Foreign Minister Boris Pankin announced that the peace conference would begin Oct. 30 in Madrid. Dr. Mahmoud Zahar, a Gaza physician and Hamas leader, said Saturday that the arrests were linked to the proposed peace talks. "This is a political campaign. It is an attempt to silence the voice of the opposition," he told the Associated Press. Arab reporters said 17 Hamas activists were detained in the Shati refugee camp, 10 in Gaza City, and many more in the Nuseirat refugee camp. The exact figure was not known. Mr. Yezouri is a Gaza City pharmacist and heads a key Hamas institution, the Islamic Charitable Organisation.

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Iran 'ready to send' troops to fight Israel

NICOSIA (AP) — Iran's President Hashemi Rafsanjani Saturday condemned the planned Middle East peace conference and said Tehran was ready to send troops to Israel to fight alongside Palestinians. "We are ready to contribute to the needs of the Palestinians," the Islamic Republic News Agency quoted Mr. Rafsanjani as saying. Opening a four-day international conference in Tehran in support of the Palestinian people, he said "Iran is even ready to dispatch troops to fight Israel along with the Palestinians." The agency quoted Mr. Rafsanjani as saying the U.S.-sponsored peace conference, expected to convene in Madrid, Spain on Oct. 30, was a "strategic blunder." Calling it an "imposed conference," he said the talks were aimed at sowing discord among Muslims. Predicting the outcome of the talks, Mr. Rafsanjani said, "in my opinion this conference will have a very weak achievement, if any."

China denies helping Iran nuclear project

BEIJING (AP) — China Saturday again denied involvement in developing Iran's nuclear weapons programme. The denial was made by the Foreign Ministry in response to a Washington Times report Wednesday that quoted U.S. officials as saying China was helping Iran build a nuclear reactor that was part of a secret weapons programme. The report also said Tehran was seeking to buy M-11 guided missiles from China. A Foreign Ministry spokesman called the report "groundless." China issued similar denials this summer when U.S. officials and an Iranian opposition leader named China as one of several countries helping Iran develop a nuclear weapon. U.S. officials said Iran had not yet done so.

Saudi in Tunis

TUNIS (R) — Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal arrived in Tunis Saturday with a message from King Fahd to Tunisian President Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali.

U.N.: 60,000 Iraqi refugees in Iran

NICOSIA (R) — There are about 60,000 Iraqi refugees in 30 camps in western and southern Iran, the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said Saturday in Tehran. It said 1.4 million Iraqis fled to Iran in April following abortive rebellions by the Kurds and Shiite Muslims against the government. The UNHCR said in a report carried by IRNA that the Iraqis were in the border provinces of West Azarbaijan, Kurdistan, Bakhtaran, Khuzestan and Lorestan.

Major dealt blow by latest poll

LONDON (R) — An opinion poll showing a seven-point lead for the opposition Labour Party dealt a blow to Saturday to the British Conservative government's hopes of winning next year's general election. Prime Minister John Major must call an election in the next nine months. Other recent polls had put the Labour Party at a narrow lead. The Harris Poll for Sunday's Observer newspaper showed that 46 per cent would vote Labour, up from 41 per cent last month. The Conservatives lost 39 per cent, down from 40 last month, and the minority Liberal Democrats 12 per cent, down from 13. The Observer survey found growing pessimism about the economy, mixed in recession with unemployment rising sharply. Those believing they would be better off in six months' time fell from 19 per cent to 15 per cent. The number expecting to be worse off rose from 24 per cent to 29 per cent. The one bright spot for the Conservatives was that Mr. Major remained well ahead of Labour leader Neil Kinnock in personal popularity. Some 72 per cent thought Mr. Major was either doing a very good or fairly good job.

Jordan accepts invitation to peace conference, reaffirms its principles

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter with agency dispatches

AMMAN — Jordan Saturday became the first country to formally announce its acceptance of the American-Soviet invitation to attend the Middle East peace conference to be convened in Madrid, Spain, on Oct. 30.

The decision to accept the invitation, which was delivered to Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber earlier in the day, was taken at a regular cabinet session chaired by Prime Minister Taher Masi.

A cabinet statement carried by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said the decision "in principle" to accept the invitation was based on "the principles of the Jordanian policy since 1967 — which are commitment to international legitimacy and U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, which call for exchange of land for peace and rule out the acquisition of territory by force and call for Israeli withdrawal from all occupied territories, including Jerusalem, and for ensuring the rights of the Palestinian people in order to achieve a just, durable and comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict."

The statement said that the "proposed peace conference provides a genuine opportunity to achieve a just, durable and comprehensive solution in the region."

The Jordanian government, in view of its realization of the nature of Arab, regional and international changes and in fulfillment of its national and pan-Arab responsibilities, has decided to accept the invitation to attend the peace conference in a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation," the statement said.

The Jordanian position will be conveyed to the two sponsors of the conference — the United States and the Soviet Union — through diplomatic channels, the statement added.

The invitation to the peace conference was delivered to Dr. Abu Jaber by American Ambassador Roger Harrison and Soviet Ambassador Yuri Gerasimov during a meeting at the Foreign Ministry.

Speaking after being handed the formal invitation, Mr. Abu Jaber said:

"We are optimistic and we hope that God will help us in this peace march because the road ahead of us is a tough and a lengthy one."

Ambassador Harrison said Washington expected to receive replies to the invitations by Wednesday.

Dr. Abu Jaber said he would discuss preparations for the conference with Soviet Foreign Minister Boris Pankin who is due in Jordan Sunday.

Dr. Abu Jaber said that Jordan was optimistic to a certain degree about the conference and hopes that all obstacles will be overcome. He cited His Majesty King Hussein's recent address to the national congress in which he said that the road ahead was long and hard.

The foreign minister said Jordan welcomes the idea of holding the conference in Madrid and was confident that the Spanish government would provide all facilities for its success.

The conference will be held at the ministerial level as provided for in the invitations sent to the concerned governments and the opening session will be attended by the U.S. and American presidents, Ambassador Harrison said.

The European Community and the United Nations as well as the member Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries will also take part in the opening session as observers.

The Gulf states will be involved in the multiparty negotiations expected to start two weeks after the two or three-day opening session, Mr. Harrison said.

(Continued on page 5)

Palestinians submit list of 14 peace delegates to U.S.

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — After two days of intensive negotiations, Palestinians from the occupied territories on Saturday named 14 delegates to Middle East peace talks, a Palestinian leader said.

The designation of Palestinian negotiators is one of the key issues that needs to be resolved before the conference can be convened in Madrid on Oct. 30.

Israel has said it would only negotiate with Palestinians from the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip who are not openly affiliated with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

The Palestinians insist they have the right to name their own negotiators, but apparently have agreed under U.S. pressure to send only delegates that will meet Israeli demands.

Palestinian leader Faisal Husseini said he handed the list of names to U.S. Consul Mollie Williamson at his home in Jerusalem on Saturday afternoon.

Mr. Hussein refused to give the names, saying the Palestinians would only make them public after other conference participants have announced whom they will send to the talks.

But a Palestinian source said the delegation would apparently be headed by Dr. Heider Abdul Shafi, 71, a physician from the occupied Gaza Strip.

Dr. Abdul Shafi is a supporter of the PLO's mainstream Fatah faction headed by Chairman Yasser Arafat.

Dr. Abdul Shafi was a member of the PLO's first Executive Committee in 1964. In 1967, he was expelled by Israel to the Sinai, then Israeli-occupied, but was later allowed to return to Gaza.

The Palestinian source said that at the request of the Americans, the names of the other delegates would not immediately be released.

Palestinian leaders had met with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker in Jerusalem Friday to discuss the composition of the Palestinian delegation to peace talks.

U.S. officials later said Mr. Baker did not receive a complete list of names during the meeting. However, Mr. Baker later assured Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir that the Palestinian negotiators would meet Israel's "parameters."

Israel refused to accept Palestinians who live in Arab East Jerusalem. Israel also insisted that no Palestinians with obvious links to the PLO be permitted in the talks.

Israel also rules out Palestinians living outside the occupied lands, saying their presence would give legitimacy to demands that Palestinian refugees have a right to return to their homes in what is now Israel.

All along, the Palestinians have insisted that they have the right to name their own delegation, and have coordinated their moves with the PLO leadership.

But they apparently have agreed to U.S. compromise proposals, for example having East Jerusalem represented by a delegate who lives in a village on the outskirts of Jerusalem that used to be part of the city before 1967.

Israeli hardliners set to battle over conference

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israel's right-wing government could split over the summons to a Middle East peace conference but Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir has promised support from the left if hardliners desert him.

Housing Minister Ariel Sharon, a declared rival to Mr. Shamir for leadership of the Likud Party, called Saturday for the prime minister's resignation and announced he would fight against the conference.

Mr. Shamir has not given a final "yes" to Friday's U.S.-Soviet invitation to Madrid but says he sees no better course. He faces his cabinet, the most conservative in Israel's history, on Sunday.

Leaders of three hawkish parties that hold the key to Mr. Shamir's slender parliamentary majority say they will leave the government if peace talks touch on territorial compromise or autonomy for Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"Land for peace" is the basis of the American policy on which U.S. Secretary of State James Baker won Arab consent to the conference, due to open on Oct. 30.

Leftist opposition leaders promised Saturday to support the prime minister if rightists bolted from the cabinet.

"There will be no forgiveness for those who may cause this historic journey to fail," said a joint statement of three left-wing parties.

Labour Party leader Shimon Peres said Saturday he was happy to see the Likud leading Israel to the conference.

"I'd much rather see them leading the country to the conference than hindering the process," he told army radio.

Right-wing parties are expected to give grudging approval to the initial, ceremonial phase of the conference.

Several prominent hawkish, including Defence Minister Moshe Arens, are expected to support Mr. Shamir.

Mr. Arens, like the prime minister, resisted the 1979 Camp David accord, which brought peace with Egypt, and opposes withdrawal from any occupied territory.

From Israel's standpoint, the primary pre-conference issue yet to be resolved is the list of Palestinian delegates.

Israel has demanded that no members of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) be included on the list, and that the Palestinians be residents of the occupied territories excluding East Jerusalem.

"Mr. Baker announced that he received a list of Palestinians who met, in general, the criteria we put forward," Mr. Shamir told reporters Friday.

"But we are the representatives of a state, we cannot be satisfied with just this, and we will find the ways to check this. Trust us."

Egypt will be observer in Madrid

CAIRO (Agencies) — President Hosni Mubarak said Saturday the Egyptian delegation to this month's Middle East peace conference in Madrid will be no more than an observer.

The comment contradicts the previous Egyptian position that it will attend the conference as a participant. Egypt is the only Arab state tied by peace treaty to Israel and had been expected to act as a go-between for the Arabs and the Jewish state.

But Mr. Mubarak, speaking to reporters, would not say whether Egyptian delegates would intercede in or mediate bilateral Arab-Israeli talks expected after the conference.

"Egypt will join as an observer in the conference," he said. "The presidents of the United States and the Soviet Union will attend, and we will send a delegation to attend only."

Wesley Egan, the U.S. charge d'affaires in Cairo, and Soviet Ambassador Vladimir Polyakov jointly met with Foreign Minister Amr Mosa Saturday and told reporters afterward that they had delivered to him the conference invitation.

Saeed Kamal, the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) Cairo representative, told reporters that PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat will visit Cairo next week to coordinate strategy on the conference.



EXHIBITION: Prime Minister Taher Masi items made by handicapped children. Mr. Masi Saturday at an exhibition of paintings and other handicrafts made by disabled children. (see page 3).

Baker hopeful on Madrid talks; but no assumptions

MADRID (Agencies) — U.S. Secretary of State James Baker said Saturday he was hopeful a Middle East peace conference would go ahead in Madrid Oct. 30 and create "an active and viable peace process" for the region.

"We are hopeful there will indeed be this conference in Madrid, but we do not take anything for granted and are not making any assumptions," Mr. Baker told a news conference with Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez.

Mr. Baker flew to Madrid from Israel for a courtesy call on Mr. Gonzalez after announcing in occupied Jerusalem Friday the surprise choice of the Spanish capital as site of the conference.

No responses have yet been received to the joint U.S.-Soviet invitation to the talks, called after months of diplomacy.

"We have been working diligently for the past seven months with the

parties concerned and we hope they will respond positively and affirmatively," Mr. Baker said.

"We hope the people of the Middle East will have the opportunity to see created an active and viable peace process."

He said extensive letters of assurances had been negotiated with each party, giving hope the response would be positive.

The conference, brokered by the United States and the Soviet Union, is designed to bring together Israel, Syria, Lebanon and a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. Observers will include Egypt, the Gulf Arab states, the Maghreb countries, the United Nations and the European Community.

There was no formal word on the site of the conference, but the Royal Palace and the Palacio de Congressos, which has housed the European security conference and a European Community summit, have been mentioned as possible venues.

Kidnappers say hostage can meet wife and child

BEIRUT (Agencies) — Pro-Israeli kidnappers, in a further sign that the Lebanon hostage crisis may be nearing an end, have told one of their hostages that his wife and the daughter he has never met can visit him.

The Islamic Jihad for the Liberation of Palestine (IJP), which has held two Americans since 1987 but remained silent throughout the latest flurry of hostage releases, said Friday it would allow university professor Jesse Turner for an hour.

"I am very, very eager to see him even for one moment," Badr Turner told the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) by telephone from the United States.

She said she would go to Lebanon in a few days, adding:

"I hope that it will be longer than one hour and I hope that they allow him to come home with me. Of course, you know he hasn't seen his daughter at all."

Mr. Turner, 44, a professor of computer science, was kidnapped with fellow American Allann Steen, 52, a professor of mass communication, from Beirut University College by gunmen disguised as policemen in January 1987.

The offer from the group holding Mr. Turner came only hours after a second kidnapping group denied it sought guarantees of personal safety for its members if all the hostages are freed.

The developments late Friday gave rise to both optimism and pessimism over changes that the remaining nine Western captives in Lebanon could be freed soon.

They also coincided with a U.S.-Soviet announcement that a Middle East peace conference will convene Oct. 30, during a period when world pressures for Israeli concessions will be acute.

IJP released photos of Mr. Turner and another American it holds, Allann Steen. The other group, called simply Islamic Jihad, released a photo of American journalist Terry Anderson.

The two groups are believed to operate under the umbrella of Hizbollah (Party of God).

The flood of photographs and statements over recent weeks sparked hope that the kidnapping groups were moving towards freeing the remaining hostages.

Pankin pledges to work for Israeli withdrawal

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — Soviet Foreign Minister Boris Pankin pledged Saturday that Moscow would work for an Israeli withdrawal from occupied Arab territories when landmark peace talks between the Arabs and Israelis open in Madrid on Oct. 30.

Syrian presidential spokesman Joubran Kourieh said Mr. Pankin made his promise during talks in Damascus with President Hafez Al Assad.

Mr. Kourieh said that Mr. Pankin, whose country is co-sponsoring the conference with the United States, said Moscow wanted to see a just peace in the Middle East on the basis of U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, which call for an exchange of occupied land for peace.

The Syrian president reiterated his desire for peace and said all parties should work to achieve it, Mr. Kourieh said.

"Everybody has an interest in a just and comprehensive peace. Everybody should work to achieve this objective," Mr. Kourieh quoted Mr. Assad as saying.

Peace conference stirs hopes, scepticism and indifference among Jordanian public

By Sana Atiyeh

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordanians greeted the news that the Middle East peace conference will take place Oct. 30 with mixed reactions dominated by scepticism that the parity will produce positive results for the Arab side and with cautious hope that the negotiations is a first step towards achieving national rights for the Palestinians.

In random interviews with the Jordan Times Saturday, those who were against the peace conference appeared shocked and saddened that the peace conference had now become a reality after U.S. Secretary of State James Baker announced the date and place of the commencement of negotiations between the

Assad, Arafat meet

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat, after prodding Palestinians to the Middle East conference table, met Syrian President Hafez Al Assad Saturday to bury years of animosity before historic peace talks with Israel.

Reconciliation is expected to pave the way for a pre-peace conference summit of Mr. Arafat and the four Arab leaders whose countries border Israel.

Syria, Israel's most unyielding Arab foe, said after talks with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker Wednesday it would attend the conference, which is co-sponsored by Washington and Moscow. It opens in Madrid on Oct. 30.

The PLO, barred from attending by Israel's refusal to speak to it, Friday sanctioned the idea of a joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation.

Israel, which considers its final response at its regular Sunday cabinet meeting, has expressed concern about the behind-the-scenes role of the PLO.

But Mr. Baker has said the names of the Palestinian delegates seem acceptable and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir says he will recommend Israeli attendance.

Mr. Arafat began talks with Vice-President Abdul Halim Khaddam immediately after arriving in the Syrian capital Saturday, his first visit for three years.

Presidential spokesman Joubran Kourieh said Mr. Arafat and his delegation met Mr. Assad and Mr. Khaddam at the presidential palace on Saturday evening.

The PLO leader, who was expelled from Syria in 1983, may also meet visiting Soviet Foreign Minister Boris Pankin before leaving for Jordan and Egypt.

Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq Al Sharaa said ministers of the front line countries would meet soon to prepare

(Continued on page 5)

Turkish parties end election campaign; 2 killed in blasts

ANKARA (R) — Turkey's politicians made their final appeals to voters Saturday with noisy motorcades and rallies. Opinion polls predict that Sunday's vote will bring defeat for the Motherland Party after eight years in power.

A policeman and a guard were killed Friday night by a bomb at a Motherland Party district office in Istanbul, where nine bombs have exploded in the past week.

But stepped-up violence by Kurdish and left-wing guerrillas has not kept the campaign from being seen as a success for Turkish democracy.

It is the third general election since civilian rule was restored after a military coup in 1980 and the first in which no party has been banned from the contest on political grounds.

A pro-Kurdish party was barred on a technicality but is running anyway in the southeast in partnership with an opposition party.

Open displays of Kurdish nationalism have been common during electioneering in south-eastern provinces under emergency rule because of a Kurdish guerrilla struggle for independence.

Elsewhere in Turkey, hot-air balloons, parachute displays and mass circuses have brought a carnival feeling to the eight-week campaign. Candidates tour flag-decked streets with music and slogans blaring from loudspeakers.

The polls predict victory for the centre-right True Path Party (DYP) of six-times Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel, but he may not win an overall majority in the 450-seat parliament.

Motherland, founded by President Turgut Ozal and now led by Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz, is lying third in most polls after the Social Democratic Populist Party (SHDP) of Erdal Inönü.

Intricate electoral rules defy easy correlation between the popular vote and seats won, making the result hard to predict. Newspapers said a coalition seemed inevitable.

Motherland has presided over eight years of rapid growth in Turkey, but inflation, uneven wealth distribution and Mr. Ozal's own unpopularity have hurt its chances of winning a third term.

Politicians made last-minute appeals to voters with noisy motorcades and rallies Saturday at the climax of a campaign marked by wild promises but

relatively little mudslinging.

"We have witnessed perfect maturity among political parties," wrote columnist Oktay Elsi in *Hurriyet* newspaper. "We have heard not one leader say a hurtful word against another."

Parties bought double-page advertisements in Saturday newspapers, promising lower prices, zero unemployment, better protection of human rights and economic development.

"Fifty per cent off all road and bridge tolls," promised DYP.

"It's my task to take Turkey into the next century as a developed country," declared Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz.

An advertisement of the Islamic fundamentalist Welfare Party showed 12 people voicing distaste for the present system in secular but Muslim Turkey. "Let us all set up a 'just order' to live as human beings in a new world," the party said.

An SHP-paid double page showed Mr. Demirel, Mr. Ozal, former Prime Minister Yildirim Akbulut and Mesut Yilmaz as identical dolls. "Turkey will break this vicious cycle," the caption read.

Television has come into its own, with debates between party leaders, slick advertising clips and use of satellite stations to evade normal restrictions on party political broadcasts.

A light aircraft used by Motherland to scatter leaflets over the southern city of Adana crashed on Saturday, killing two people, including the pilot, Anatolian news agency said.

Guerrillas of the underground Dev-Sol (Revolutionary Left) group and the separatist Kurdish Workers party (PKK) have stepped up attacks in the run-up to the voting.

Dev-Sol claimed Thursday's wounding of a Motherland candidate in the Western province of Bursa and the killings of five policemen and a retired general in Istanbul last week.

The PKK it carried out Thursday's attack on an air force base in Istanbul, in which five servicemen were wounded.

It said the attack was in reprisal for Turkish cross-border raids on its bases in northern Iran and Iraq, and Ankara launched those raids after a PKK border attack killed 11 Turkish troops.

Thirteen people — seven guerrillas, three soldiers, a policeman, a village guard and a civilian — have died in clashes in the mainly Kurdish southeast since Wednesday.

Palestinians airlifted to U.S. after Gulf war trying to stay

WASHINGTON (AP) — Their plight is a legacy of the Gulf war. They are at least 500 Palestinians, among a group of 2,000 to 3,000 people airlifted out of Kuwait after Iraq's invasion and admitted to the United States.

They cannot go back to Kuwait and time is running out for them to stay here, the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) announced Thursday.

Immigration documents allowing them to remain in the United States expire Dec. 31. The families say U.S. immigration officials have told them they will be subject to deportation at the end of the year.

And the government of Kuwait has told them it would not take them back, they add.

They were flown to this country as a humanitarian gesture because at least one family member is a U.S. citizen, in most instances a child.

"We are grateful to those United States officials who saved our lives" but "quiet simply, all of

these families have no place to go," Dr. Iyad Al Shurafa, a physician and spokesman for the people, told a news conference.

The number of Palestinians involved is in dispute. There are about 500, says the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). But Dr. Shurafa says the number is over 2,000, when children are taken into account. INS says 2,200 people of various nationalities were airlifted out of Kuwait to the United States. The ADC-Discrimination Committee says the figure was 3,000.

The ADC has asked President George Bush to issue an executive order allowing the families to remain here for another four years.

That would allow most of them time to receive permanent resident status.

The committee also wants Congress to pass legislation granting them permanent resident status outright or allow them to remain in the United States on an extended basis.

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Israeli Arabs mood mixed on peace talks

The Jerusalem Post

NAZARETH — Uncertainty mixed with hope appears to characterise the mood among Israeli Arabs in the run-up to the proposed regional peace conference, according to leading residents of this mixed Muslim-Christian city.

Feelings run the gamut from outright rejection of the U.S.-brokered attempts to bring peace to the region, to grudging willingness and even optimistic forecasts that ultimately the Palestinian people will have a state of their own alongside Israel.

The optimism is based on the changes that have occurred in the region in the wake of the Gulf war and the world balance of power.

"I believe the door to peace has now been opened and nobody, not Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir nor his right-wing partners will be able to close it," said businessman Awad Abu Sini, a leading member of the Roman Catholic community.

"My optimism is based on the fact that the world wants peace in this region, and both America and the Soviet Union are pushing for this. A classic example was what happened to Iraq, which tried to ignore U.N. resolutions but was eventually forced to comply with them."

"I have actually begun to think, rather than dream, that the time will come when (as an Israeli citizen) I will be able to visit

neighbouring Arab countries."

He maintained, however, that lasting peace would not be achieved unless there was international and, more important, Israeli recognition of the right of Palestinians to self-determination. "This is the minimum that is required to end the conflict," he said.

Lutfy Masbhour, editor-in-chief of the mass circulation Arabic weekly *Al Sannaa* said the mood among Israeli Arabs was mixed.

There were those who felt the Palestinians had made enough concessions and feared "another Camp David." Others thought the Americans were pushing Israel into a trap, while the majority believed that the Palestinians had little choice but to attend the conference.

Masbhour said most Israeli Arabs and Palestinians had completely lost faith in the ability or desire of Arab countries and their leaders to help them.

"There is also the feeling that if the Palestinians don't enter the negotiations now, Arab countries would be happy not to represent them," he said.

The fundamentalist Islamic Movement, which has widespread support in the Triangle and to a lesser extent in Galilee, is the only body so far to have publicly opposed Palestinian participation in the peace conference for "religious and ideological" reasons.

Iranian rebels put up impressive show of might

ASHRAF CAMP, Iraq (R) — The husband and wife leaders of rebels fighting to overthrow Iran's Shiite Muslim government Friday reviewed the biggest parade of military muscle their National Liberation Army (NLA) has organised.

Masoud Rajavi, leader of the exiled Mujahideen-e-Khalq movement, and his wife, Mariam, took the salute at a four-hour march-past of tanks, artillery and hardware they say they will soon use to overthrow the "Khomeini mullahs" in Tehran.

"I will answer all your questions in my country," Mr. Rajavi told reporters after he and his wife laid a wreath at a cemetery to 43 guerrillas killed in Iranian operations against the group's bases in Iraq in March and April during failed twin revolts against the Iraqi government.

Asked when that would be, Mr. Rajavi replied only "sooner than you think" before driving off with his wife and another senior woman figure, Mujahideen-e-Khalq Deputy Secretary-General Fahimeh Ervani, to the parade.

The occasion was the second anniversary of the election to the post of secretary-general of 38-year-old Mariam, who is credited by her supporters with turning the five-year-old NLA from foot soldiers into a mechanised fighting force.

"She has no military background, she has a degree in metallurgy, but she has transformed us," said Farzin Hashemi, from the movement's London office.

At least 140 Chinese, Soviet and British-made tanks as well as a score of heavy artillery pieces, dozens of armoured personnel carriers and batteries of Katyusha rocket launchers were driven past the reviewing stand at this base 50 kilometres from the Iranian border.

Jeep-mounted rocket batteries are said to be Mariam's brainchild as are anti-aircraft guns mounted on armoured personnel carriers.

By the standards of resistance groups the world over, it was an impressive display of might. The

march-past included some 60 armoured vehicles, including tanks, armoured cars, flatbed trucks, repair vehicles, scores of communications jeeps and ambulances.

Spokesmen declined to say whether the NLA had put its entire army on display for the benefit of journalists in Iraq to cover the Gulf war aftermath.

"We have several bases and many men along the border," said one. Many tanks were driven by women in drab olive fatigues and red headscarves, the uniform of a movement that says it counts on women for 30 per cent of its fighting force, which is estimated at up to 40,000.

It believes that the participation of women will be a draw in Iraq where, it says, women are repressed by the brand of Islam followed by President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.

The NLA, which is based in Iraq, is dedicated to the overthrow of Mr. Rafsanjani's government which it says has betrayed the people by following the Islamic revolution of the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

"The mullahs have been facing a tremendous crisis in the country for the past three months. The entire country has been the scene of protests, demonstrations and clashes between citizens and the regime," said Mohammad Mohadesin, head of the movement's foreign affairs department.

"This surge comes at a time when the regime's economy is on the brink of bankruptcy with \$20 billion of foreign debt, 50 per cent inflation and unemployment created entirely by the mullahs," he said.

The movement, which mixes Marxism and Islam, says it is fighting from rear bases in Iraq to form a provisional government followed by free and fair elections.

Iraq, which fought the 1980-88 war with Iran, formalised a peace agreement with Tehran in the early days of the Gulf crisis to free troops from its eastern border for duty in the south.

Iraq appeals to UNESCO for end to U.N. sanctions

PARIS (Agencies) — Iraq appealed Friday for an end to the United Nations blockade on it, saying "hundreds of children are dying daily from lack of food and medicine."

Iraqi Education Minister Ihsan Abdullatif Al Bazz spoke at the biennial general conference of the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

Mr. Bazz said that the Gulf war that ended the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait had destroyed schools, educational equipment, books, housing, and cultural sites.

"To satisfy the needs of five million Iraqi students is today an extremely complex affair, creating a situation without equal in the world," he told assembled delegates from 163 countries.

The United Nations has maintained a strict trade embargo on Iraq of force to it to comply with ceasefire resolutions requiring it to reveal and destroy its weapons of mass destruction. The U.N. Security Council has allowed Baghdad to sell some oil to pay for food and medicine.

Mr. Bazz called the embargo "an unjust blockade imposed by the dominant powers in the world" and said it had caused the death of 150,000 Iraqi children.

UNESCO's executive board last week prevented a proposed Iraqi resolution condemning damage to cultural sites in the Gulf war from being up on the general conference agenda.

"Missing" Kuwaitis

Iraq and its Gulf war foes met in a special "reparation commission" this week but failed to resolve the issue of 2,100 people listed by Kuwait as missing, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said Friday.

Saudis and Islamic bodies boosting aid to Soviet Muslims

MECCA, Saudi Arabia (AP) — Spurred by a revival of Islam in the Soviet Union, Saudi Arabia and the world Muslim bodies, it backs have shipped Korans, helped rebuild Soviet mosques or advanced money to Moscow. Now they want to expand their help.

"Muslims worldwide will extend a helping hand to uplift Soviet Muslims and further spread Islam in the Soviet Union," said Hatim Hassan Qazi of the World Muslim League.

Mr. Qazi, an assistant secretary-general for organisations and studies, said in an interview Tuesday that the league would sharply boost its help to Soviet Muslims, but gave no specifics.

The league and another body, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, (OIC), hope for a rejuvenation of faith among Soviet Union's Muslims, estimated to number between 60 million and 80 million.

Both groups are based in Saudi Arabia, whose leadership is using its vast oil riches to help Muslims as well as advancing \$1.5 billion — two-thirds in cash and one-third in credit facilities — to help the ailing Soviet economy.

In addition Saudi Arabia and its conservative Gulf allies reportedly have pledged to advance another \$5 billion in cash and credit to the Soviets.

Mr. Qazi said the Mecca-based Muslim League's first steps to help Soviet Muslims included setting up brick factories in Muslim republics to provide materials for building and repair of mosques.

"This has saved a lot of money and effort because many of the historic mosques needed repair,"

The two-day Geneva meeting, in which Iraqi representatives met with delegates from Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the United States, Britain and France, was the sixth of a commission set up by the ICRC after the Gulf war.

But ICRC delegate Angelo Gnaedinger told reporters two problems remained when the meeting ended on Thursday — the Kuwaiti list and Iraqi requests for information on their dead who could not be identified.

Kuwait last month gave the ICRC a list of 2,100 people it said were still missing, most of them believed to have been rounded up in the final days of the war in February.

According to Mr. Gnaedinger, Iraq replied that it had no prisoners left, and it renewed requests for information on Iraqi soldiers killed during the war but not yet identified.

He added: "It has not been objectively established how many died on the battlefield so no precise figure can be given on how many unidentified Iraqis there are."

Mr. Gnaedinger said the ICRC had taken care that political issues — such as reports that the U.S. broke the Geneva convention by burying Iraqi soldiers alive in their trenches by using tanks fitted with ploughshares — did not interfere with the purely "practical" discussions in Geneva.

Iraq last month asked the ICRC to pass on a request to the American government for more information on the killings.

Mr. Gnaedinger said the Americans responded to the request early this month by providing geographical locations inside Iraq where the operations took place. The ICRC had passed the information on to Iraq.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Polisario: Moroccan drive threatens poll

PARIS (R) — The Polisario Front, fighting for the independence of Western Sahara, accused Morocco Friday of launching a massive settlement drive that threatened Friday of launching a massive settlement drive that threatened a U.N. referendum on the future of the disputed territory. "The operation to settle Western Sahara has never been so massive and dangerous as since the United Nations moved into the territory. We have never seen such alarming proportions," Polisario spokesman Mohammed Sidati said. He said 35,000 Moroccans had been poured into the area and 170,000 more were expected for a visit by King Hassan on Nov. 6. "It is a slap in the face for the United Nations and the international community. It shows a determination to violate the peace plan," Mr. Sidati told Reuters. "We demand the departure of all the settlers and we ask the Security Council to act to put an end to the king's new march. For us the referendum cannot take place under these conditions." Rabat and the Algerian-based Polisario have accused each other of violating a Sept. 6 U.N.-sponsored ceasefire due to lead to a referendum on the territory's status early next year. The United Nations wants the electorate to be based on a 1974 census by Spanish colonial authorities, which established a population of 74,000. Morocco, which took control of the territory after Spain withdrew in 1975, argues that 120,000 Saharans were on Moroccan soil at the time and should be allowed to vote. "Morocco wants to make the task of the identification commission impossible. It is trying to justify a new march, a massive transfer of population to Western Sahara," Mr. Sidati said.

Sweden protests to PLO, Israel over killing

STOCKHOLM (R) — Sweden said Friday it had protested to Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) over the killing last month of a Swedish U.N. soldier in Lebanon. Sweden's Foreign Ministry said in a statement that it had separately contacted Israel's ambassador to Stockholm and the PLO representative to convey the protest. It added the United Nations in New York had given a corresponding protest. Sergeant Alf Kenneth Michael Fransson, a Swede serving in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), was killed on Sept. 13 during a Palestinian guerrilla raid in southern Lebanon. Sgt. Fransson, who had been taken hostage in a hut along with 11 other U.N. soldiers, was shot in a flurry of gunfire. The United Nations later said the gunfire was initiated by soldiers of the Israeli army and of the South Lebanese Army (SLA) who had surrounded the hut.

Saudi financier denied Argentine visa

BUENOS AIRES (AP) — The government rejected a request for a visa by Ghazi Pharaon, the Saudi financier implicated in the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) scandal, a newspaper reported Friday. The interior ministry denied the visa after consulting with the presidency, La Nación reported. Luxembourg-based BCCI, in which Mr. Pharaon owned a 15 per cent stake, was shut down last July by regulatory officials in England, the United States and other countries investigating charges it laundered drug money, trafficked in arms and bribed public officials. The Federal Reserve Board in Washington has charged Mr. Pharaon fronted for BCCI in its illegal takeovers of four U.S. banks. The Fed has sought to ban Mr. Pharaon from involvement in the U.S. banking industry. Mr. Pharaon has denied the charges. The visa application was made at an Argentine embassy in a Middle Eastern country that was not identified. Mr. Pharaon is building a luxury hotel on downtown Buenos Aires, and co-owns a joba plantation in the northwest province of Salta on Argentina's border with Bolivia.

Police charity refuses Libya's donation

LONDON (AP) — A police charity decided Friday to refuse a gift of £250,000 (\$425,000) from Libya that came with a letter of regret for the killing of a policeman by gunfire from the Libyan embassy in London seven years ago. The Police Dependents' Trust said it did not want to accept the offer because of Libya's "record of support for terrorist organisations," including the outlawed Irish Republican Army, "who have been responsible for the deaths of British police officers." It has applied to the charity commissioners for formal permission to turn down the gift. When Libya offered the donation in June it drew an angry response from many fronts, and the dead policeman's mother called it "blood money" that should not be accepted. Yvonne Fletcher was shot dead in April 1984 by a man firing through a window of the Libyan embassy in St. James's Square. Eleven others were wounded. The British government severed relations with Libya.

Chad's coup leaders accused of Libya contacts

PARIS (R) — The leader of a failed coup in Chad had made an unauthorised agreement with Libya, Chadian Foreign Minister Ahmad Soungui said in an interview published Friday. Interior Minister Mahmoud Bada Abbas, arrested in the wake of last Sunday's failed coup in which at least 20 people were killed, signed a pact three weeks ago in Tripoli. He said it was a declaration of intent on an exchange of intelligence and a free flow of people between the countries. "I had to go to Tripoli myself to tell (Libyan leader) Muammar Qadhafi this declaration was null and void," Mr. Soungui told the French evening newspaper *La Croix*.

Greece offers cooperation on Cyprus

ATHENS (R) — Greece offered Friday to work with any Turkish government that emerges from Sunday's election in order to resolve the Cyprus issue, a target U.S. President George Bush has set for 1991. Prime Minister Constantine Mitsotakis told a special parliamentary session discussing foreign policy that his government was prepared to continue efforts to reunite the divided island in a federation with any Turkish government. Cyprus's Greek and Turkish communities have been divided since 1974 when Turkey invaded and occupied the northern third of the island after a short-lived coup in Nicosia engineered by the military junta then ruling Greece. Mr. Bush said during a visit to the two NATO allies this summer that he would push for a solution on Cyprus within the year.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

17:30 Les Badabois
17:50 A la découverte de zones continentales
18:15 L'école des fans
19:00 News in French
19:15 Carrot de soles
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Golden Girls
21:10 Murder She Wrote
22:00 News in English
22:20 The Orchid House

PRAYER TIMES

04:21 Fajr
05:30 Sunrise (Sunnah) Duhur
11:20 Dhuhr
14:32 'Asr
17:03 Maghreb
18:30 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swedish Tel. 810740
Lutherans of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 64590.

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrence Church Tel. 622666
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 622541
Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 626543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 772261
Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 777571
Assyrian International Church Tel. 685326
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 823824, 654932
Church of the Nazarene Tel. 676991.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
A rise in temperatures will take place and some clouds will appear at medium and high altitudes. Winds will be light and variable changing in the afternoon to northwesterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and some rain.

AMMAN

Min./Max. temp. 14/29
Aqaba 21/34
Dhahran 15/30
Jordan Valley 22/35

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Fakher Al Bilal Tel. 625778
Dr. Hameed Haddad Tel. 731267
Dr. Muhammad Alshadi Tel. 778929
Dr. Adel Dabbabeh Tel. 62177
Firas pharmacy Tel. 661912
Ferdous pharmacy Tel. 778336
Al Asana pharmacy Tel. 637025
Al Salem pharmacy Tel. 636730
Yaacoub pharmacy Tel. 644945
Shamoun pharmacy Tel. 637660
IRBID:
Dr. Abdul Hameed Ghannouchi Tel. 623101
Al Shams pharmacy Tel. 278283

ZARQA:

Dr. Hisham Shurabati Tel. 985417
Khalil pharmacy Tel. 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre Tel. 637111
Civil Defence Department Tel. 661111
Civil Defence Emergency Tel. 630341
Rescue Tel. 630341
Fire Brigade Tel. 892228
Blood Bank Tel. 75121
Highway Police Tel. 843402
Traffic Police Tel. 896390
Public Security Department Tel. 69031
Hotel Complaints Tel. 605880
Price Complaints Tel. 661176
Water and Sewerage Tel. 897467
Complaints Tel. 897467
Amman Municipality Tel. 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) Tel. 121
Overseas Calls Tel. 010230
Central Amman Telephone Tel. 623101
Repairs Tel. 661101
Jordan Television Tel. 773111

RADIO JORDAN

Water Authority Tel. 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority Tel. 815615
Electric Power Tel. 636381
Company Tel. 08-33200
RJ Flight Information Tel. 08-33200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport Tel. 08-33200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre Tel. 81381332
Khalil Maternity, J. Amn. Tel. 642816
Akhil Maternity, J. Amn. Tel. 642412
Jabal Amman Maternity Tel. 642462
Mallat, J. Amn. Tel. 636140
Palestine, Shamsi Tel. 6641714
Shamsi Tel. 669131
University Hospital Tel. 848485
Al-Mustashir Hospital Tel. 6672219
The Islamic, Amn. Tel. 66612757
Al-Ahli, Amn. Tel. 6641646
Indian, Al-Malajir Tel. 7771013
Al-Bashir, J. Ashraf Tel. 7751126
Army, Marja Tel. 89161115
Queen Alia Hospital Tel. 08224050
Amal Hospital Tel. 674155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital Tel. 09783323
Zarqa National Hospital Tel. 09790560
Al Shams Hospital Tel. 09786732
Al Shams Modern Hospital Tel. 09799590

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital Tel. 02727355
Greek Catholic Hospital Tel. 02727275
Ras Al Madras Hospital Tel. 02747100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital Tel. 03514111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) Information department at the Queen Alia International Airport. Tel. 08-33200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:15 Beirut (RJ)
06:30 Jordan (RJ)
06:45 Tunis, Comoros (RJ)
11:00 Istanbul (RJ)
13:00 Cairo (RJ)
13:30 Damascus (RJ)
20:00 Riyadh (RJ)
20:15 Abu Dhabi,

Centrist candidate elected to Women's Federation presidency; 60 Islamists boycott polls

By Mariam M. Shablin
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A high voter turnout, the election of a centrist candidate as president and the boycott of about 60 Islamist voters who did not register marked the Women's Federation elections Friday.

Out of a possible registered voter turnout of 426, 401 women crammed into the Jordanian Chamber of Industries Hall to cast their votes for federation president as well as the eight seats on the executive committee that were being contested.

While the post of president went to centrist candidate Haifa Abu-Ghazaleh, known to have the support of former federation President Haifa Al

Bashir, the "Unity Bloc" a coalition of independent, liberal and leftist women, won a sweeping victory by taking all eight seats on the executive committee.

The race for the post of president hinged on a bloc of thirty votes, reportedly controlled by the Jordanian Communist Party. The bloc of thirty apparently voted for Ms. Abu-Ghazaleh, who received a total of 205 votes, according to federation observers.

The candidate of the Unity Bloc, Rabab Nabulsi, received 174 while a third candidate, Leila Abu Nab, received 4 votes. Seventeen blank ballots were cast in the presidential election.

While the ladies that lost showed no hard feelings, it was

evident that the race for president was a close one in that the bloc vote was expected to go to Ms. Nabulsi.

The Unity Bloc which Ms. Nabulsi represents has at least one communist in its coalition, which won the 8 remaining seats on the 17-seat executive committee. The other 8 seats on the committee go to the president of each governorate in the Kingdom. The president of the federation automatically assumes a seat on the executive committee.

The committee is composed for the first time in the federation's history by a group of semi-politicised women that hope to catapult qualified females in the Kingdom into the public and political arena.

said one of the new members of the executive committee.

The boycott of the Islamist women in the federation marked what seemed to be the beginning of yet another round of deliberations on the legality of election procedures.

Spokeswoman for the Islamist group Lutfieh Zeneidi said that women associated with her group had contacted lawyers to prove that the voting procedures used in Friday's elections were contrary to the federation's constitution.

The Islamist group, she said, would not participate in federation elections until they considered them legal.

The group is closely associated with Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan.

Seminar on food pricing and effects on economy begins

AMMAN (Petra) — Delegates from nine Arab countries and representatives of various regional organisations affiliated to agricultural and food production sectors Saturday opened a six-day meeting in Amman to discuss pricing policies of food commodities and their effects on marketing.

Delegates to the conference, organised by the U.N Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), will review working papers dealing with government policies in the production and distribution of food commodities and other policies related to subsidising prices.

Addressing the opening session was Agriculture Minister Subhi Al Qasem, who called on countries of the region to step up cooperation in agricultural development fields to promote food production and meet the growing needs of the population.

Technical cooperation among countries of the region is of paramount importance in view of the similarity of their agricultural products, said the minister. Mr. Qasem thanked FAO for organising the seminar which, he said, has its influence in ensuring the success of organisations marketing food commodities.

The question of pricing plays a major and vital role in countries' economies since it is closely linked to world economic changes, he said.

Jordan, like most other countries of the region, suffers from insufficient food production to meet the needs of its people, the minister pointed out. He said that although the Kingdom has had some success in attaining self-sufficiency in the production of vegetables, fruits and poultry meat, it is far from reaching the desired levels, especially in the production of wheat and red meat.

He said lack of water remains the major problem facing the agricultural sector in Jordan.



Prime Minister Taher Masihi looks over items on display at a general exhibit of handicapped children's crafts (Petra photo)

Prime minister opens exhibition of handicapped children's work

Calls for creation of jobs for disabled

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Taher Masihi Saturday opened a general exhibition of various items by the handicapped children receiving care and rehabilitation services by Vocational Training Centres run by the Ministry of Social Development and voluntary associations in the Kingdom.

Minister of Social Development Awni Al Bashir told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that the exhibition marks the first of a series of displays which will be organised in the near future in various regions.

By exhibiting the work of handicapped people, the ministry

hopes to help the less fortunate citizens of this country to market their products and contribute to society, the minister said. It is hoped that the exhibition will help the handicapped children market their products in the urban, rural and badia regions, he added.

Ministry of Social Development Assistant Secretary General Faisal Bashabsheh reviewed the ministry's efforts to promote the work and the efforts of its centres and said that the exhibition was one form of solidarity with handicapped people.

On display for seven days at the King Abdullah Park in Am-

man are a number of crafts, including embroideries, traditional costumes, tricot, furniture, garments, paintings and photographs.

Ministry officials said that the exhibition was designed to attract as many Jordanian visitors as possible to buy the items and open the way for the creation of more jobs for the unemployed.

Present with the prime minister at the opening ceremony were the ministers of interior and awqaf and Islamic affairs, the Amman governor, a number of parliament members and officials in addition to an audience of invited guests.

Parliament member condemns Israeli conviction of Hamas leader

AMMAN (J.T.) — A Lower House of Parliament member has voiced strong condemnation of Israel's conviction of an old man to life imprisonment after accusing him of being behind resistance activity against the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land.

The conviction of 56-year-old Sheikh Ahmad Hassan, leader of the Muslim movement Hamas, in the past week is a flagrant violation of the Palestinian people's rights in their own homeland and a manifestation of Israel's continued human rights violations, said Bassam Haddadin.

Sheikh Yassin was convicted by a military court in Gaza last Wednesday of manslaughter, incitement and heading an illegal organisation. The man, confined to a wheelchair since childhood, was sentenced to life in prison for manslaughter plus 15 years on other charges.

Sheikh Yassin's disability and sickness were sufficient justification for the Israeli court to commute the sentence, and their refusal to do so is a clear indication of the inhuman nature of the Israelis and their disregard of human rights, Mr. Haddadin added.

He asked: "What would have been the case had the convicted been an Israeli in another part of the world?"

Sheikh Yassin had set a heroic example of steadfastness and defiance of Israeli arrogance, proving the Palestinian people's resolve to confront and to resist the presence of Israeli troops in Arab lands, Mr. Haddadin said.

The deputy appealed to human rights organisations and Amnesty International to interfere and ensure a retrial of Sheikh Yassin at the hands of honest judges from European countries in the presence of human rights officials so that the old man's rights can be safeguarded.

Meanwhile, in statements published in the Paris-based Middle East magazine, Sheikh Yassin voiced his group's rejection of the Palestine National Council (PNC) decision to take part in the peace conference.

The decision does not meet the requirements and the aspirations of the Palestinian people, he said. Sheikh Yassin expressed his belief that Israel would not give up one inch of the occupied lands.

Sheikh Yassin denied that Hamas was executing Palestinian collaborators with Israel without proper trial. He said that Hamas has executed only a handful of people who had admitted to committing their crimes and were sentenced after due trial in accordance with the teachings of the Koran.

Control of environmental pollution to be discussed

KARAK (Petra) — A two-day seminar on control of environmental pollution will start Monday at Muta University.

The seminar, which is organised by the university in cooperation with the Higher Council for Science and Technology, will discuss 20 working papers presented by environmental experts and specialists.

The papers will deal with the pollution of air, water and oil, gas, liquid and solid pollutants, spreading environmental awareness in Jordan, environmental laws and legislations, desertification, industrial pollution, the effects of insecticides on soil and water and ways of controlling pollutants.

Organisations working to increase tourism traffic at Dana Wildlife Preserve

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordan Cooperative Organisation (JCO), in cooperation with the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN), has carried out a pilot project within the Tafleh Governorate at the Dana Wildlife Preserve designed to develop the region touristically and economically.

JCO Director General Jamal Al Bedour said that the two institutions, backed by the efforts of a number of government ministries and local groups, drew up plans for the project and has embarked on its implementation.

At present, the concerned parties are implementing the infrastructure for the project and conducting restoration on old homes in the region of Dana to be transformed into museums, restaurants and camping sites for tourists, Mr. Al Bedour said. He said that their work involves creating the opportune climate for amateur painters who could conduct their work in the open air.

To encourage tourism, the JCO and its partners to the project have encouraged the use of horses for the benefit of tourists to help them roam the area, Mr. Al Bedour added.

In fact, the JCO invited an international expert in the manufacture of precious stones to help in the process of utilising the available raw materials ground in the Dana area like granite and carnalite in the manufacture of the stones, he said. This project, he added, is being implemented in conjunction with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

The international expert has already embarked on the manufacture of the precious stones and training of local craftsmen to the Dana region in the same skill.

Mr. Bedour said a society has been set up to supervise the various activities at the reserve which entail the exploitation of the raw materials, creating jobs for the unemployed and ensuring steady income for the local inhabitants living in one of the poorest regions of the Kingdom and under the poverty line.

The JCO has adopted a new policy of concentrating efforts to stimulate the work of productive cooperatives rather than helping the consumer cooperative societies, said Mr. Al Bedour. He said that the JCO's activities are mostly in the economic, agricultural, industrial and tourism sectors helping to train people to earn a living and strengthening the fabric of the local community through cooperation for production.

Mr. Al Bedour said that the JCO is now offering assistance in rural societies, including women groups, wanting to increase production and those involved in traditional crafts in cooperation with the ministries of planning and tourism, the Noor Al Hussein Foundation, the Queen Alia Social Welfare Fund, the Vocational Training Corporation, the Tourist Investment Corporation and RSCN.

Dana Reserve encompasses 150 square kilometres ranging from wooded mountains in the northern sector to a lesser scrubsteppe in the south. The Ministry of Agriculture and the RSCN are jointly helping the area to preserve vegetation and increase the number of trees.

Ex-U.S. soldiers to seek end to American aid to Israel

By Nur Sati
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Eight former members of the American Armed Forces, who quit the military during and after the Vietnam war for reasons of conscience, left Amman on Friday for the United States to begin intense campaigns in favour of the Palestinians and Israel.

The group, calling itself the 1991 Vietnam Veterans' Delegation to the Middle East, is not affiliated with any political party or ideology. They spent 10 days in the West Bank and 12 days in Israel.

Because the United States is involved in the Palestinian-Israeli issue, "We felt it is our duty to go there to understand and see what was necessary in terms of medical aid and amputees in particular because two of the team's members are amputees," said Bill Kelsey, who quit the military after the Vietnam War.

Since the outbreak of the Gulf crisis, peace and fact-finding missions heading for Iraq and the Israeli occupied territories via Jordan have not been an unfamiliar sight to the public.

Despite this, "there is a lot of confusion among the peace movement. There is a feeling of failure," Mr. Kelsey said.

Elaborating, he added that questions are being raised as to the effectiveness of these missions.

On the other hand, "We need to understand it is really appalling that the level of ignorance among the American public is high. People really do not know what is going on in this region," he said.

In that respect, "we visited the two countries to find out what we could do (for them in the U.S.) and what position we should take."

The group will be talking to their fellow citizens and community leaders in the United States. Several people in the group are well known, according to Mr. Kelsey, and will be taken seriously in the peace movement.

"Our guidance will be taken seriously," he said.

To the ease of the Palestinian-Israeli problem, the group would like to see all aid to Israel cut off. "Not aid made to Israel on condition of certain behaviour, rather, the whole notion of aid to (Israel) has to be looked at," Mr. Kelsey told the Jordan Times.

One tenth of one per cent of the world's population receives as much aid from the United States as the remaining of the 99.9 per cent of the world's population, he said.

"Let us say that (even if) Israel was the most perfect country in the world, there is still something wrong with the aid," Mr. Kelsey said. "So all of us are calling for real thorough, profound reassessment of the U.S.-Israeli relationship."

According to the U.S.-based Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), U.S. aid to Israel totalled at least \$4.8 billion in fiscal year 1989 and over \$5 billion in fiscal year 1990.

"The House Foreign Affairs Committee's most recent report estimates U.S. aid to Israel for fiscal year 1991 at over \$5.6 billion," the ADC said in a report.

In the case of Iraq, the group will call for a lifting of sanctions. The group believes that whatever problems there are between the American and the Iraqi leadership, people should not be punished for it.

"That is the message the Iraqi people gave us. They would say: 'Whatever problems you Americans have with the leadership, be it not the one being harmed by the sanctions. It is the people. Do not punish us for it.'"

The group visited Baghdad, Karbala, Najaf, Basra, Safwan, Balikan and Hilla.

One vivid memory stuck to Mr. Kelsey's mind when the group visited the United Nations zone in Safwan at the Kuwait-Iraq border.

He described how when the group entered the U.N. hospital there, they saw men being brought in from the desert with their hands and feet blown off.

"Apparently, Iraq is paying money for people to go to the desert and search for land mines. The unemployed Iraqis are the ones who go to the desert," Mr. Kelsey said.

This began about one month ago, he added. During a three-week period about 100 casualties were brought in to the Norwegian Hospital, an average of five or six a day.

"One of the men who was brought in, had scars on his throat from the Iran-Iraq war. His hands were mangled from a previous injury, his chest was full of scars of a dozen bullets. One of his legs was scarred and mangled from a terrible injury," he said.

"Now he had his feet blown off because of the land mines," Mr. Kelsey continued. "That was symbolic to me ..."

Exhibition depicts effects of Gulf war on artist

AMMAN (J.T.) — An exhibition of paintings by Iraqi artist Sina Ata opened Saturday at the Royal Cultural Centre.

The exhibition, which runs through Oct. 28, is characterised by abstract expressionism which depicts the artist's impressions in the periods before, during and after the Gulf war.

Mr. Ata, who is originally a civil engineer, held several exhibitions in Baghdad and participated in many other group exhibitions. His works show a variation of styles influenced

by the Gulf war, turning from vivid colours before the war to greyish blacks and browns afterwards.

Arab critic Jabra Ibrahim Jabra said of the artist: "One is delighted and disturbed at seeing Sina Ata's paintings... this is the painting of paradox, intense and puzzling. Hence, its remarkable quality which demands our closer scrutiny."

The exhibition is organised by Al Hayat International Trading Group, which has recently started attracting artists to exhibit in Amman.

WHAT'S GOING ON EXHIBITIONS

★ Art exhibition by Abdul Rauf Shamoun, Khalid Khreis and Mohammad Hussein Abdullah at Abdul Hameed Shamoun Foundation Gallery (Open 10 a.m. till 5 p.m.)

★ Art exhibition by Iraqi artists Ismael Khayyat, Mohammad Abdullah, Khater Mohammad, Ali Mandilawi, Khalid Wahl and Elwan Ali at Baladina Art Gallery (located at the beginning of Gardens Street from Safeway).

★ Exhibition of paintings by Jordanian artist Mohammad Al Jalous at the French Cultural Centre.

★ Art exhibition by Fadwa Jalal Nabulsi at the British Council.

★ Art exhibition by Iraqi artist Sina Ata at the Royal Cultural Centre.

FILM

★ Feature film entitled "Meet John Doe" at the American Centre — 7 p.m.

You are cordially invited to view the new designs of Bani Hamida Women Weavings that represented the project in

The Helsinki Exhibition
which was held under the patronage of Their Royal Highnesses
Prince Faisal Ben Al Hussein & Princess Alia Al Faisal

at
Bani Hamida House
Rashid St.
Tel. 658696-7

Save The Children Project

وزارة الأشغال العامة والإسكان
دائرة العطاءات الحكومية
MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS & HOUSING
GOVERNMENT TENDERS DIRECTORATE

**Ministry of Public Works & Housing
Government Tenders Directorate
Invitation To Tender No. (141/91)
For Drilling water wells in Azraq Basin - Jordan**

Contractors specialised in water wells drilling who are interested in participating in this tender are requested to contact the Government Tender Directorate at the Ministry of Public Works & Housing, Amman, Jordan, to receive tender documents starting from 20/10/1991 and in accordance with the following terms:

1. Participation and Origin
Participation is open on equal terms to all natural persons and companies or firms that are nationals of the member states of the European Economic Community or of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.
2. Project Description
The work involves the supply of all labour, tools, facilities, material, equipment and apparatus for drilling and logging & testing eight water wells of depth ranging from 800 to 1000 metres distributed in the Azraq Water Basin.
3. Contractors participating are requested to submit proof of performing similar tasks in Jordan or elsewhere and also to submit previous experience, C.V. of his technical staff and list of his equipment in addition to other requirements listed in the documents.
4. The price of the tender documents is JD 200, non-refundable.
5. The project is totally financed by the EEC grant No. SEM/03/628/006.
6. Tenders including any conditions or reservations contrary to those in the contract will be neglected.
7. Last date for sale of documents is on 10/11/1991.
8. Tenders are to be handed to the Government Tenders Directorate, Amman, Jordan, not later than Monday of 18 November 1991 before 1:30 p.m.
9. Any enquiry or questions regarding this tender may be directed to:-
**General Director
Governments Tenders Directorate
Fax No.: 684759
P.O. Box 1220
Amman, Jordan**

**Chief of the Central Tenders Committee
General Director of the Government
Tenders Directorate
Eng. Basheer Al-Jhagbeer**

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Sunday's Economic Pulse

Turkish water conference and peace pipeline

By Dr. Fahd Al-Fanek

TURKEY issued invitations to several Middle Eastern countries and the United States to attend a conference, over water resources in the Middle East, to be convened next month. It is likely that the conference will be postponed because Syria threatened not to participate if Israel is invited while the United States announced that it will boycott the conference unless Israel is present.

The Turkish-sponsored conference is meant to promote the idea of regional cooperation over water, so that Israel will become a legitimate partner in the ownership and management of water in the whole region. Turkey's aim is to market water, as an export commodity, through a pipeline that will carry the water of the Taurus and Euphrates rivers, in south east Turkey, to Saudi Arabia, via Syria and Jordan, provided Saudi Arabia will underwrite the costs of building the pipeline and its operation. The pipeline will benefit Jordan and Israel besides Saudi Arabia (Syria is not interested). This may entail some kind of cooperation and coordination with Israel before the Palestinian question is resolved and a lasting peace is achieved.

American think tanks and institutions of strategic studies, some of them are offshoots of the Israeli lobby, showered us recently with studies and reports warning that the Middle East will be

plagued in the coming decade by bloody wars over water. The purpose is to suggest that lack of stability in the Middle East is not caused by the protracted Israeli occupation of Arab lands, nor by the Western zeal to control Arab oil; it is rather caused by the imminent water crisis, or the time bomb about to explode.

In this respect, Dr. Joyce Star, who used to work for the Israeli lobby (AIPAC) before she was transformed, somehow, into a researcher specialising in the problem of water in the Middle East, thus enjoying the appearance of scientific objectivity and honesty to mask her service to the Israeli designs, was very prominent.

The Turkish-Arab relations were always troubled by mutual suspicions. Turkey can demonstrate its goodwill towards its Arab neighbours by concluding a treaty with both Syria and Iraq to fairly divide the water of Euphrates and Tigris among the three countries before trying to solve the water crisis in the Arab Peninsula and Israel.

As far as we in Jordan are concerned, the water crisis has already become acute. All surface water resources are on the borders. In each case Jordan was deprived of its fair share of both River Jordan or Yarmouk River water, due to the Israeli selfishness and power politics.

In spite of our reservations against any regional project that entails any form of cooperation with Israel before reaching a peaceful solution to the Palestinian question, and against dependency on an external source of water which can be interrupted at any time in the future for any reason, thus placing Jordan at the mercy of the source and transiting countries, we have to admit our bad need of new sources of water for civilian, industrial and irrigation purposes. The Turkish peace pipeline would of course be able to alleviate Jordan's water crisis if it made available some 500 million cubic metres of water at a reasonable price.

Caught between political reservations on the one hand and economic necessities on the other, we have to evaluate the Turkish peace pipeline project carefully, and weigh the economic benefits against the political and security risks. Jordan needs to reach a definite position towards the project, within the framework of a unified Arab position. This calls for immediate inter-Arab coordination. The secretary general of the Arab League called for such Arab coordination on water. It is not known why the secretary general did not follow up on his own idea, and has not yet called for an Arab coordination meeting to precede the questionable Turkish conference.

Soviet cards to play

SOVIET FOREIGN Minister Boris Pankin arrives here on a short visit today against a backdrop of considerable Jordanian and Arab scepticism about Moscow's role in the upcoming peace conference. Rightly so, we think, public opinion is generally apprehensive about the influence the Soviet Union could have over the course of peace negotiations, especially in light of the weakening status of the USSR in the international arena and Moscow's quick restoration of diplomatic ties with Israel as well as the continued flow of Soviet Jewish emigrants into Palestine. In fact, it is not uncommon to hear questions by laymen in the Arab World asking "what could the Soviet Union do?" to help implement U.N. resolutions 242 and 338 when all Moscow appears capable of doing is play second fiddle to the Americans in co-chairing the Madrid conference and to put pressure on Syria and the PLO in order to ensure their participation in the conference and leave it at that.

There are no easy answers to give to our own people on the questions they have for and about the Soviet Union and its role. But there are several things that can be said in defence of our Soviet friends and their role in the upcoming negotiations, not least of which is the special relationship that Moscow has had with much of the Arab World and which continues to this very day. The Soviet Union might indeed be playing second fiddle to the Americans vis-a-vis the conference, and to Israel by virtue of allowing Soviet Jews to emigrate en masse and restoring diplomatic ties without achieving real progress in peace talks. But this should not mean that the USSR has lost all the cards it could play in support of just Arab demands and rights and that Moscow will not take a position different from the U.S. or Israel's in the negotiations.

For one thing, and despite all the recent changes inside the Soviet Union, Moscow recognises fully the PLO and Palestinian national rights and insists on full implementation of U.N. resolutions calling on Israel to withdraw from all occupied Arab territories. Furthermore, Israel and the U.S. should give careful consideration — and they do — to what Moscow thinks about and wants from the peace process, since the Americans but especially the Israelis have at stake a whole gamut of regional factors and bilateral relations to take into account in dealing with the Soviets ranging from the issue of Jewish migration to commercial ties to disarmament in the region to guarantee of final borders that might be agreed upon between the Arabs and Israelis.

Jordan, which has had a consistently friendly and fruitful relationship with the Soviet Union over the years, should understand and not underestimate the great difficulties our Soviet friends face at home. But none of us should ignore the importance of the cards Moscow still holds in the Middle East. We should take the opportunity of Mr. Pankin's visit to our country to further strengthen our partnership in the quest for just and lasting peace. Our common objectives can best be served by continued understanding of where each of us stands and by respecting our mutual interests and outlook.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily Saturday referred to the official announcement on the convening of a peace conference in Madrid and said that Israel's unwillingness to reach peace with the Arabs on the basis of U.N. Security Council resolutions was manifest in Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's statement that the Israeli participation was a risk to the Jewish state. It is clear that Israel considers orientation towards peace as a matter forced on it by the superpowers because the Israeli leaders believe that they should not be giving up any part of the occupied Arab territories, said the paper. But it should be noted that the statements of the Soviet and American foreign ministers about their countries' views with regard to the Israeli settlement programme were somewhat reassuring, the paper added. It said that Mr. Baker's reaffirmation that such settlements constitute an obstacle to peace means that Israel is responsible for any obstacles to the peace process. This could mean that Washington, under the circumstances, might resort to announcing further delays in granting housing loan guarantees to the Jewish state until the negotiations with the Arabs are over, said the paper. It said that this could be a very positive step on the part of the American administration because it would prompt Israel to take serious steps to reach a peace settlement with its neighbours and grants the Palestinians their lawful rights. The paper said that the Arabs are going to the peace conference with a genuine desire for peace, but it should be noted that it is up to the superpowers to see to it that Israel's obstacles would not hinder the peace process.

Al Dastour said that the superpower invitations, to the parties involved in the Middle East problems, to attend the Middle East peace conference marked a new step forward towards the achievement of a lasting settlement in the region. The paper said that the ball is now in the Israeli court and it has to decide at a cabinet meeting Sunday whether to attend the conference or not. It is, however, worrying to the Arabs that Israel has obtained what it has been demanding with regard to the restoration of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and received assurances from the American administration similar to those given to the Arabs, said the paper. It said that it is not a matter of attending the conference, but what the Arabs are anxious to see is whether the Israelis will carry out the U.N. Security Council resolutions and exchange land for peace. The paper said that the U.S. diplomacy is now needed more than at any time in the past to pave the way for successful negotiations leading to a lasting and just settlement.

By Ed Blanche
The Associated Press

NICOSIA — The Arabs go to the Middle East peace talks with Israel, their foe for the last half-century, with few bargaining chips and in as much disarray as they met the Jewish challenge in 1948.

U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's announcement in Jerusalem that the peace conference will be convened in Madrid Oct. 30 caused little outward excitement in Arab capitals.

Still, it will be the first multi-party meeting between Arab and Jew in nearly 20 years.

In light of America's emergence as the only superpower in a world much changed since 1948, there is a hope that the 43-year-old Arab-Israeli conflict may now be resolved — even though old hatreds may not vanish overnight. Obstacles remain.

The Arabs want the return of all Arab land occupied by the Israelis since their sweeping vic-

tory in the Arab-Israeli war — the West Bank seized from Jordan, Egypt's Gaza Strip, Syria's Golan Heights as well as a buffer zone in South Lebanon held since 1978.

But the Israelis have been adamant that they do not intend to exchange land for peace.

For many Israelis, the lands captured in 1967 extended Israel's borders to give the Jewish state strategic depth for the first time since it was founded.

They believe that giving up these lands, increasingly populated by Jewish settlers, is political and military suicide.

But in recent years, almost imperceptibly, most Arab leaders have accepted that the state of Israel is now a reality with which they must live.

Even the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), among the most intractable of Israel's enemies, is now prepared to accept half a loaf rather than none — an independent homeland in the West Bank and Gaza. Whether



M. KAHIL

they get it is open to question.

To secure Israel's participation in the peace talks, the Americans had to make some major concessions to the Jewish state that, on the face of it, leave little room for manoeuvre.

The United States said it opposed the creation of a Palesti-

nian state on Israel's borders and has grudgingly turned a blind eye to the Jewish settlements still springing up in the occupied lands as the Palestinian uprising that erupted in December 1987 loses momentum.

Analyst William Quandt of Washington's Brookings Institu-

China's harsh words to Taiwan show fear of changing world

By David Schlesinger
Reuters

PEKING — The break-up of the Soviet Union has forced Peking's ageing leaders once again to confront one of their worst nightmares — Taiwan independence.

Their reaction to once-forbidden talk of independence for the island becoming a legitimate political issue has been a mixture of anger and ignorance, diplomats and analysts said.

"China just doesn't understand the situation on Taiwan, how things have changed so radically," a Western diplomat said. "They see the nationalists getting soft on independence, they see the Baltics going independent and they see increased calls for independence in Taiwan. They know their own time is running out for reunification so they have to lash out."

Peking's communists and the nationalists who fled to Taiwan in 1949 when they lost China's civil war used to agree on only one thing — that the island was part

of China and would one day be reunited with the mainland.

To say otherwise was a crime. Since Taiwan's government lifted martial law in 1987 and encouraged more democracy, the political climate has been transformed.

The challenge to the old order reached a climax on Sunday when Taiwan's main opposition party voted to include a motion calling for an independent republic of Taiwan in the party manifesto.

This threw the ruling Nationalist Party into a quandary and infuriated Peking's communists. For Peking's rulers, the threatening new angle to Taiwanese politics comes at a time when they are feeling isolated and vulnerable after the collapse of communist rule in the Soviet Union.

The octogenarians who still dream of a China reunited with Taiwan know they have few years left to achieve their goal.

They have reacted to the new independence challenge with threats and their harshest rhetoric

in years.

China reminded the world it had not given up the threat to use force against an independent Taiwan in an article in the overseas edition of its outlook magazine, reprinted in the official press on Wednesday.

"Those who play with fire will be burned to ashes," China's President Yang Shangkun said last week.

Other spokesmen warned independence activists to "wake up and rein in at the brink of the precipice."

China has demanded the Nationalists crack down on the opposition. But Taiwan's government has little room to manoeuvre in the new, more democratic atmosphere, analysts said.

"This is a hot potato for the Nationalists. They risk straining uneasy relations with the mainland if they do not penalise the (opposition), but anything more than a slap on the hand would fuel domestic political tensions," said Taiwan law Professor Hsu Chih-Hsiung.

Harsh action "would be seen as

revival of iron-fisted rule and backfire on the Nationalists in the elections. The harder the Nationalists crack down on independence, the worse they'll do in the polls," he said.

On Dec. 21, Taiwan is to hold an historic election. All ageing National Assembly members elected in China before the Nationalists' 1949 defeat will finally retire, to be replaced by delegates elected or appointed on the island.

China's leaders simply do not understand Taiwan's democratic process, analysts said.

They too have few options. Military action would be instantly condemned in the West, where Peking's reputation is only just recovering from the 1989 army killings of pro-democracy activists.

Residents of both China and Taiwan fear a government that ordered troops to fire on its own people in the streets of Peking might well follow through on threats against Taiwanese independence.

Baker scores a triumph, but now the real problems begin

By Marcus Elinson
The Associated Press

Already there have been some signs of trouble ahead.

Syria announced this week that it will attend the multilateral talks. That, says Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, is "absolutely negative and doesn't promise success."

The Palestinian issue could also be problematic. Israel has vowed not to sit with Palestinians who do not live in the occupied territories, or who belong to the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

The Palestinians gave Mr. Baker a list of their delegates Friday, but forbade him to show it to the Israelis. If Palestinians who are not to Israel's liking show up at the conference, the talks could collapse.

Then there are the settlements. Asked what would happen if the Arabs demanded a freeze on building, Mr. Shamir replied flatly: "We will say no."

Both sides could face domestic problems for talking to the enemy. His Majesty King Hussein will have to cope with Muslim fundamentalists who oppose the peace talks. No one has forgotten that the only other Arab leader who made peace with Israel, Anwar Sadat of Egypt, was assassinated three years later.

Mr. Shamir need not fear such violent reactions, but his agreement to go to the conference is bound to rock his cabinet. It may not fall immediately, but ultra-rightists in his coalition have vowed to defect if he talks to PLO delegates or discusses yielding land.

"Old suspicions won't disappear quickly. The gaps are real and the gaps will not be easily overcome," Mr. Baker said in Jerusalem Friday. "But we take encouragement from issuance of these invitations."

Secretary of State James Baker served up the details that enabled him to announce invitations Friday to the Arabs and Israelis to attend the conference, set to open Oct. 30 in Madrid, Spain.

The gathering is to be a two-day ceremonial affair at which Israel, the Arab states and the Palestinians will sit under joint U.S.-Soviet auspices.

Just to get this far has taken Mr. Baker eight trips to the Middle East, spending hours in painstaking discussions with the key players, Israel, Syria and the Palestinians, plus side trips to Egypt, Jordan and the Gulf.

But the conference will be meaningless unless it gets to grips with what is really at stake here: the Arabs' demand to get back land they lost to Israel in the 1967 Middle East War, and Israel's insistence that the Arabs prove their sincere acceptance of the Jewish state.

Neither side has much faith in the other. Focusing on the land, the Arabs are bound to make an immediate demand for Israel to stop building Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

For Israel, the test of the conference is not what happens Oct. 30 in Madrid, but what comes after. It says the conference must immediately proceed to direct negotiations between Israel and each Arab state. It also wants multilateral talks at which regional issues like water conservation and disarmament can be dealt with.

Sectarian warfare returns to terror-stricken Belfast streets

By Jim Campbell
Reuters

BELFAST — In the Protestant and Catholic ghettos of Belfast, people are now afraid to go out at night. They won't even answer the door after dark.

Burly security men guard pub doors, vigilantes prow the streets on the lookout for unfamiliar faces.

Belfast is back to the bloody days of the 1970's. Gunmen from both sides of the sectarian divide have taken to the streets with increasing ferocity.

With church and political leaders seriously alarmed by the escalating violence — the death toll is already nearing last year's total of 76, and climbing fast — police have set up a special squad to track down the killer gangs.

But some community groups say this is a cosmetic exercise. Many uniformed and undercover police and soldiers are already on the ground in the ghettos of north and west Belfast, but gunmen are

seldom stopped or caught in the act.

Paramilitary leaders from the Protestant side that wants this northern enclave to remain British and the Catholic republicans who want a united Ireland say the spiral of "tit-for-tat" killings is likely to continue. Neither side wants to be seen to be the first to back down and lose face with their hardline supporters.

Cardinal Cahal Daly, spiritual leader of four million Roman Catholics on both sides of the border, said the murder gangs were taking Northern Ireland to the brink of a sectarian conflict more bloody than anything seen in the past 20 years.

Britain's Northern Ireland Minister Peter Brooke warned that "political ends cannot be achieved out of the barrel of a gun."

The sectarian reprisal shootings had stopped for two months when both sides called a ceasefire during peace talks brought about by Mr. Brooke, aimed at returning Northern Ireland to local gov-

ernment after 17 years of direct rule by London.

But the talks collapsed in July and the killing resumed — but with a new and sinister twist.

The Irish Republican Army, battling to oust Britain from Northern Ireland, had tended to confine its guerrilla attacks to police, soldiers and commercial targets.

But then it began planting car bombs in Protestant housing estates. Protestants retaliated with car bombs in Catholic areas.

Next, rival gangs began prowling Belfast townships looking for random victims. In north Belfast, Protestants hunted down lone Catholics, stabbing them and beating them with iron bars.

Catholics in west Belfast retaliated by singling out lone Protestants and slashing them with knives.

They have been nicknamed "the Catholic butchers" because their methods recall "the Shankill butchers," a gang which slashed the throats of dozens of Catholics in the 1970's until their leader

Lennie Murphy was killed by the IRA.

Taxi drivers were the next victims. Both sides began killing cabbies — easy targets who could be murdered at will when they picked up fares in the ghettos.

Now taxi drivers are more selective, and many are staying home.

The big fear in Catholic west Belfast is that Protestant gunmen, better armed and organised than ever, will single out a pub or bar for a mass attack. That's why bar doors are reinforced, bolted and guarded.

Typical of the victims of these random killings was Karl Hegney, an unemployed painter ambushed by Protestant gunmen on his way home. His wife, Pauline, 26, her face puffed and tear-stained, asked: "What is all of this supposed to achieve? Surely it is time all this killing stopped? It seems the innocent suffer the worst but I harbour no bitterness for the men who killed him. There is no hatred in me, only a terrible emptiness and sadness."

Tortured by the brutalised

By Robert Fisk

BEIRUT — A few hours after the American guided-missile cruiser Vincennes shot down the Iranian A 300 civilian airliner over the Gulf on July 3, 1988, killing all 290 innocent souls on board, a gunman burst into the underground cell in Lebanon in which U.S. Lt-Col. William Higgins was being held hostage.

Lt-Col Higgins had been kidnapped in Lebanon almost five months earlier, on Feb. 17, a feisty, tough, footballer man who was the head of the United Nations observer group supervising the 1988 truce between Lebanon and Israel. The Shiite gunman, shaking with anger at the report that the Americans had shot down the Airbus, asked Lt-Col Higgins for his reaction to the news. According to U.N. officers who investigated his case, Lt-Col Higgins — probably unaware that the Iranian plane was a civilian airliner — expressed his satisfaction.

Enraged by this response, the gunman, according to the same officials, pointed his Kalashnikov automatic rifle at the unarmed American and opened fire with a full clip of ammunition, killing him instantly. Did outrage or sadism provoke this man to shoot Lt-Col Higgins? Murder or manslaughter? A year after his death, Lt-Col Higgins' kidnappers released a videotape of their captive, hanging from a rope, claiming he had just been "executed" in retaliation for the Israeli kidnapping of the Shiite cleric Sheikh Abdul Karim Obeid.

Thus can anger and cruelty shape the behaviour of Lebanon's kidnappers. Jackie Mann's revelations of his treatment in the cellars of Beirut are in no way unique. Indeed, they are mild compared to the savagery meted out against other captives in Lebanon. Kidnapped Lebanese — thousands of forgotten prisoners whom the West has always ignored — provide infinitely more terrible stories of their captivity.

Christian militiamen captured by their Druze opposite numbers were tortured to death with red-hot irons in the Chouf mountains in 1983, while Christian gunmen gang-raped and then butchered kidnapped Druze women. Only because we in the West choose to forget that Arabs have suffered from the plague of abduction far more grievously than Westerners are we surprised at the apparent inhumanity of the captors.

Let us go back, however, to 1985, when the wave of kidnapping first embraced Americans and Europeans. Lebanon had endured two Israeli invasions, the massacre of certainly hundreds and perhaps as many as 2,000 Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila camps by Israel's allies, the artillery and aerial bombardment of Muslim militias by American and French forces.

Israel had used an "iron fist" — its own dreadful destruction — against the rebellious Shiite villages of southern Lebanon. In the Gulf, the West was giving logistical, military and political support to the Arab leader who had invaded Iran — a man called Saddam Hussein — while hundreds of Lebanese guerrilla fighters locked up by America's Israeli allies in Lebanon were, according to Amnesty International, routinely tortured with electricity.

Working as a journalist in this brutal world, Terry Anderson, the Associated Press bureau chief in Beirut, was also kidnapped. Mr. Terry had risked his life among the Shiites of Beirut to report the U.S. Marine bombardment of their homes during the American-Shiite fighting of 1983. He was — is — a fine man who least deserved his fate. We now know that he was kept for the first two months of his captivity in utter darkness in the basement of a ruined hotel, chained to the wall, constantly told he was to be "executed." He later described to fellow prisoners how he wept during those terrible days, despairing of ever seeing his family again.

He was beaten. So were the other American hostages who later joined him. Mr. Anderson watched another captive — the kidnapped CIA station chief, William Buckley — die from ill-treatment, and years later Mr. Anderson was seen beating his head in desperation against his cell until his blood ran down the wall. When Tom Sutherland, the kidnapped American dean of agriculture at the American University of Beirut, was brought letters from his family, his kidnappers showed him his mail, but at first refused to hand it over on the grounds that he too was a CIA agent. Only when his fellow hostage, Father Lawrence Jenco, went down on his knees before the kidnappers, pleading for their kindness towards a totally innocent man, did they hand over the letters.

Fear that their identity would be discovered prompts almost all Lebanese kidnappers to insist that their captives remain blindfolded for hours each day. Jackie Mann was told to put a towel over his head each time his captors entered his cell. Other Westerners have spent days — in one case months — with their eyes tightly bound with cloth. Even when he was trying to negotiate the release of American captives in 1985 — while still technically a free man — Terry Waite, the Archbishop of Canterbury's envoy, was forced to sit on a hard chair with his eyes bound while kidnappers threatened his own life as well as those of the hostages.

When Mr. Waite himself became a captive, he appears to have been kept in isolation for at least two years, sick and in despair, usually blindfolded and always suspected of being a spy by kidnappers who were aware of his meeting with then Vice-President George Bush and Lt-Col. Oliver North. So ill did he become that his captors feared he would not survive his imprisonment and tried to prepare the ground for his possible demise by telling journalists in Beirut that he had already died.

When the French hostage Michel Sourat was dying of cancer, he was cared for only by a Lebanese Jewish doctor, also a hostage, whose "execution" was later claimed by the kidnappers. Mr. Sourat asked to be moved to a room away from his fellow captives. When he died there, his kidnappers announced that he too had been "executed." Once Mr. Waite was out of danger — after which he was joined by Mr. Anderson, Mr. Sutherland and the British hostage John McCarthy — the stories of his death suddenly ended.

There have been individual cases of sadism. Several freed Western hostages — not Mr. Mann — recounted mock executions. The kidnappers of the American Joseph Cicippio forced him to make a videotape announcing his imminent execution, in which he tearfully said a "final" goodbye to his young Lebanese wife — before being "relieved" by his captors. A French journalist abducted in West Beirut tried to commit suicide after repeatedly being told that he would spend the rest of his life in a cell.

After years drenched in perspiration during Beirut's hot summers, hostages were given air-conditioning, only to find that the sound of the machine damaged their eardrums. A Belgian captive held by Palestinians was not allowed to wash for six months.

In the end, his hands were so slippery with human grease that he could not even button his shirt.

The individual courage of the hostages themselves in no way mitigates this appalling treatment. Mr. Terry Anderson, ordered to take off his trousers for a security search, indignantly refused and punched his kidnappers in the face when he was threatened. Hostages were — and still are — moved around Lebanon in sealed steel boxes beneath lorries, fearful of suffocation on every journey. Now as John McCarthy has recounted, Mr. Anderson, Mr. Sutherland and Mr. Waite are often allowed to watch television and read books and magazines, their torment eased by accoutrements worthy of a third class hotel. Treatment at the Israeli-controlled Khiam prison in southern Lebanon is also said to have improved.

But Khiam provides a grim counterpoint to the disgraceful treatment of the Western hostages in Beirut. The routine use of electrical torture in this jail — on women as well as men — has been largely ignored in the West, even though publicised by Amnesty International. The inmates, now being traded for the Western hostages, are no more accessible to the Red Cross than the Western captives. There have been consistent reports of mock executions at Khiam. When one young man emerged after months of isolation there in a box no larger than a dog kennel, a premature hunchback with his back covered in putrefying sores, not a voice was raised in protest by the Western politicians and newspapers that now so loudly — and so rightly — condemn the unforgivable treatment meted out to Jackie Mann.

In this context, the prisoners of Lebanon — whatever their nationality — are as much victims of a political tragedy as of the brutality of kidnappers and militiamen. There is no shortage of evil in Lebanon. But had the hostage holders and the prison guards not been invisibly mutilated by the terrible events that have taken place here, would they treat their captives so cruelly? Perhaps the freed prisoners — Westerners and Lebanese alike — will have to suggest whether the moral response should be revenge or forgiveness, in a ruined land where justice is as rare as mercy — The Independent.

groups not represented in the PLO. Other groups, such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) have agreed to the peace conference although they disagree on some conditions.

PFLP leader George Habash said Saturday the decision to accept a joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation was "a big blow to the PLO."

"The PLO is standing on a dangerous side after it submitted to the American conditions, (its) surrenderist policy and the gratuitous concessions."

Some of the Palestinian leaders were in Tehran for a four-day Iranian-sponsored conference on Palestine. Iran's Islamic leaders have taken a hardline stance against negotiating with Israel.

The general view here is that almost all factions accept the idea that the conference will be held, even if they do not believe it will yield the desired result of Israel returning occupied territories to the Arabs.

government-in-exile, met with Mr. Pankin, the sources said. Mr. Arafat and Damascus cut ties when Syria backed a rebellion against his leadership by Colonel Abu Musa in 1983.

Mr. Arafat's only visit to Syria since then was in 1988 when he came to Damascus for the funeral of his military deputy Khalil Al Wazir (Abu Jihad) who was assassinated in Tunis, by Israeli agents.

The two leaders also met on the sidelines of Arab summits in Algeria and Morocco but relations remained cool.

In Tunis this week Mr. Arafat overcame hardline opposition to rally the Palestine Central Council behind a Palestinian presence at the peace conference.

Diplomats expected Mr. Arafat to have talks with representatives of Palestinian opponents based in the Syrian capital including the Palestine National Salvation Front of four

that their captives remain blindfolded for hours each day. Jackie Mann was told to put a towel over his head each time his captors entered his cell. Other Westerners have spent days — in one case months — with their eyes tightly bound with cloth. Even when he was trying to negotiate the release of American captives in 1985 — while still technically a free man — Terry Waite, the Archbishop of Canterbury's envoy, was forced to sit on a hard chair with his eyes bound while kidnappers threatened his own life as well as those of the hostages.

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After years drenched in perspiration during Beirut's hot summers, hostages were given air-conditioning, only to find that the sound of the machine damaged their eardrums. A Belgian captive held by Palestinians was not allowed to wash for six months.

In the end, his hands were so slippery with human grease that he could not even button his shirt.

The individual courage of the hostages themselves in no way mitigates this appalling treatment. Mr. Terry Anderson, ordered to take off his trousers for a security search, indignantly refused and punched his kidnappers in the face when he was threatened. Hostages were — and still are — moved around Lebanon in sealed steel boxes beneath lorries, fearful of suffocation on every journey. Now as John McCarthy has recounted, Mr. Anderson, Mr. Sutherland and Mr. Waite are often allowed to watch television and read books and magazines, their torment eased by accoutrements worthy of a third class hotel. Treatment at the Israeli-controlled Khiam prison in southern Lebanon is also said to have improved.

But Khiam provides a grim counterpoint to the disgraceful treatment of the Western hostages in Beirut. The routine use of electrical torture in this jail — on women as well as men — has been largely ignored in the West, even though publicised by Amnesty International. The inmates, now being traded for the Western hostages, are no more accessible to the Red Cross than the Western captives. There have been consistent reports of mock executions at Khiam. When one young man emerged after months of isolation there in a box no larger than a dog kennel, a premature hunchback with his back covered in putrefying sores, not a voice was raised in protest by the Western politicians and newspapers that now so loudly — and so rightly — condemn the unforgivable treatment meted out to Jackie Mann.

In this context, the prisoners of Lebanon — whatever their nationality — are as much victims of a political tragedy as of the brutality of kidnappers and militiamen. There is no shortage of evil in Lebanon. But had the hostage holders and the prison guards not been invisibly mutilated by the terrible events that have taken place here, would they treat their captives so cruelly? Perhaps the freed prisoners — Westerners and Lebanese alike — will have to suggest whether the moral response should be revenge or forgiveness, in a ruined land where justice is as rare as mercy — The Independent.

groups not represented in the PLO. Other groups, such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) have agreed to the peace conference although they disagree on some conditions.

PFLP leader George Habash said Saturday the decision to accept a joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation was "a big blow to the PLO."

"The PLO is standing on a dangerous side after it submitted to the American conditions, (its) surrenderist policy and the gratuitous concessions."

Some of the Palestinian leaders were in Tehran for a four-day Iranian-sponsored conference on Palestine. Iran's Islamic leaders have taken a hardline stance against negotiating with Israel.

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government-in-exile, met with Mr. Pankin, the sources said. Mr. Arafat and Damascus cut ties when Syria backed a rebellion against his leadership by Colonel Abu Musa in 1983.

Mr. Arafat's only visit to Syria since then was in 1988 when he came to Damascus for the funeral of his military deputy Khalil Al Wazir (Abu Jihad) who was assassinated in Tunis, by Israeli agents.

The two leaders also met on the sidelines of Arab summits in Algeria and Morocco but relations remained cool.

In Tunis this week Mr. Arafat overcame hardline opposition to rally the Palestine Central Council behind a Palestinian presence at the peace conference.

Diplomats expected Mr. Arafat to have talks with representatives of Palestinian opponents based in the Syrian capital including the Palestine National Salvation Front of four

that their captives remain blindfolded for hours each day. Jackie Mann was told to put a towel over his head each time his captors entered his cell. Other Westerners have spent days — in one case months — with their eyes tightly bound with cloth. Even when he was trying to negotiate the release of American captives in 1985 — while still technically a free man — Terry Waite, the Archbishop of Canterbury's envoy, was forced to sit on a hard chair with his eyes bound while kidnappers threatened his own life as well as those of the hostages.

When Mr. Waite himself became a captive, he appears to have been kept in isolation for at least two years, sick and in despair, usually blindfolded and always suspected of being a spy by kidnappers who were aware of his meeting with then Vice-President George Bush and Lt-Col. Oliver North. So ill did he become that his captors feared he would not survive his imprisonment and tried to prepare the ground for his possible demise by telling journalists in Beirut that he had already died.

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Mixed reaction among Jordanians

(Continued from page 1)

we can get out of the conference and how important we are to the Americans."

People on the skeptical camp, however, argued that the U.S. should not be trusted as a fair sponsor of Arab-Israeli negotiations because of the country's historic support of the Jewish state.

"The traditional relationship between the U.S. and Israel does not give the Americans the objectivity or fairness to play the role of the referee during this conference," said Fu'ad Majdalawi, a 23-year-old accountant, adding that it would be natural for the U.S. to side and support Israel throughout the talks.

Mr. Majdalawi said that this was the wrong time for the Arabs to begin negotiations with Israel, saying that the Arabs "have never been so divided before, thus weakening their position."

"Besides, how could the Arab countries who participated in launching a full-fledged war against another Arab country, Iraq, and continue to sanction that country, is now willing to sit with the Israelis and make peace?" he asked angrily.

"In fact, it would be politically naive for Israel to give up anything to the Arabs when it is in such a weak position," commented Mr. Majdalawi.

Jamal Abu Ammar, a sales manager at a computer company, agreed with him, saying that the outcome of the conference would be "disappointing."

"We make demands, but from a very weak position, so why should Israel and the U.S. — both in a very strong position — give something to the weak?" he asked pessimistically.

Hiba Sudah, a 21-year-old secretary held a similar opinion and described the Arab participation in the upcoming conference as a method "to shut up the Arab masses."

"When I heard Baker's announcement on TV last night, I felt so frustrated that the Arabs allowed themselves to fall in the Israeli trap," she said.

Naval Sharif, another young secretary, argued with Ms. Sudah saying that there was no reason to oppose the conference.

"It's not wrong to go to the conference if there is some hope," she reasoned to her colleague.

"And if we can't get anything, we have nothing to lose and we won't be blamed for trying."

Saad Batayneh and Mayssa Ma'ani, both architects, said that there should be no question on participating in the conference, because "any outcome from the negotiations would be better than our current situation."

"My concern is that the Arabs must go to the negotiating table with clear objectives, strong terms and demands, and concentrate on the quality of the negotiations," Mr. Batayneh, 36, told the Jordan Times.

Ms. Ma'ani agreed, saying that the Arab negotiators must go to the conference well-prepared, be far-sighted, patient and with planned objectives.

"In other words, we have to know what we are going to say in the next 10 years," she commented.

"I totally support the idea of this conference," said Jihad Humdan, an air conditioning technician, who was drinking his tea with a group of other young men at an Amman cafe.

"I believe that the U.S. and the Soviet Union will pressure Israel into giving up the occupied territories and implement international resolutions in our favour," he told the Jordan Times as his friends nodded in agreement.

He was optimistic that the conference would solve the Palestinian problem, "especially maybe — that we won't have to be strip-searched and our shoes taken off every time we pass the bridge to go to the other side," he said referring to Israeli security checks at the King Hussein Bridge.

"I feel so sad," he told the Jordan Times. "The Arabs are giving Israel what it never dreamed of having before, and

occupied territories "because the U.S. will do what it wants."

For Mohammad Odeh, a janitor at one of Amman's hotels, the peace conference means easing restrictions for him to visit his home in the West Bank.

"The important thing for me is that I won't pay JD160 to the Israelis every time they give me a permit to visit the West Bank," he told the Jordan Times, adding that he did not follow political news.

Others like Hisham Hamdi, a popular restaurant manager, was also indifferent and said he felt "nothing" when he heard the news of the convening of the conference.

"I know this will be a historic conference, and I hope it will benefit the Arabs and Palestinians," Mr. Hamdi said matter-of-factly. "But we'll have to wait and see what the results will be."

A middle-aged housewife, Najla Abdallah, was cynical about the conference. "It just means — maybe — that we won't have to be strip-searched and our shoes taken off every time we pass the bridge to go to the other side," she said referring to Israeli security checks at the King Hussein Bridge.

"I feel so sad," he told the Jordan Times. "The Arabs are giving Israel what it never dreamed of having before, and

they will sign Palestinians to the Israelis forever."

However, Mrs. Abdallah, a mother of six, believes that Israel would give some territory back to the Palestinians or Jordan in exchange for peace. "But what is the territory and how much are we getting?" she asked.

For Nadim Dabbour, a businessman, the outcome of the conference would benefit Israel and provide "only temporary security and stability in the region."

Mr. Dabbour, who cynically described any future treaty between the Arabs and Israelis as an "economic agreement," insists that Israel would live up to its word that it will not give up any territory and might only "provide a symbolic kind of autonomy for the Palestinians in the occupied territories."

Several people who appeared sympathetic or supportive of Islamist groups were approached, but declined comment when asked their opinion by the Jordan Times.

Islamists have announced that they oppose the upcoming negotiations with Israel due to ideological reasons. They reject any compromise on Palestine with the Jewish state which they refuse to recognize and believe that all of Palestine must be liberated through Jihad.

Wars and mutual destruction," he said.

The senior-most American and Soviet diplomats in Syria, Lebanon and Egypt delivered similar invitations to the respective foreign ministries.

The Palestinian invitation was delivered to activist Faisal Husseini in Arab Jerusalem by the American consul.

Bahrain, Tunisia and Morocco also reported receiving the invitations. France pledged Saturday to support the Middle East peace talks and called on participants to show good faith during the parity.

A short Lebanese Foreign Ministry statement said U.S. Ambassador Ryan Crocker and Soviet Ambassador Gennady Ilfitchev jointly handed the invitation letter to Foreign Minister Fares Bzeiz upon his return from Damascus last Friday.

Bahrain announced the receipt of the invitation to the peace conference as the number of participants attending as observers appeared to be on the increase.

Originally, GCC Secretary-General Abdullah Bishara was to represent Bahrain and other council members.

Jordan accepts invitation

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Geradnov the Soviet ambassador, said that the Soviet Union and the United States were closely cooperating to prepare for the conference. So far the two have been able to overcome numerous difficulties which had cropped up in the process of paving the way for the conference, he said.

Mr. Pankin's visit to Jordan, the ambassador said, is to reaffirm the Soviet leadership's support for Jordan's role in the peace process.

He said Moscow and Amman maintain coordination in this regard, and Mr. Pankin's visit was part of the coordination process.

Meanwhile Spanish Ambassador to Jordan Manuel Cervera said in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that the choice of Madrid as venue for the conference came as a surprise to all. He attributed the choice to the fact that Spain enjoys good relations with all parties involved and its historic links with countries of the region.

Mr. Cervera expressed delight and

the Spanish government's satisfaction for hosting the conference and said Spain would exert all efforts to make the peace process a success.

"The road to peace is long and hard, but once the parties started the negotiations an atmosphere of mutual confidence would be created," he added.

Madrid will also host the multiparty negotiations after the opening of the conference, he said.

Information Minister Mahmoud Al Sharif described the decision of the United States and the Soviet Union to issue invitations for the conference as "a historic turning point."

Jordan, he told reporters, hoped the talks would lead to a "new page in the history of the region in which peoples coexist, the demands of the Palestinians are met and their rights are respected."

Mr. Sharif described the talks as the beginning of a lengthy road. "We hope it will also allow the peoples of the region to move towards building a prosperous future and channel their energies towards development instead of spending on



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Financial Markets

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U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	NEW YORK close Date: 18/10/91	NEW YORK close Date: 17/10/91
Sterling Pound	1.7285	1.7190
Deutsche Mark	1.6875	1.6958
Swiss Franc	1.4755	1.4805
French Franc	5.7515	5.7780
Japanese Yen	129.85	129.38
European Currency Unit	1.2135	1.2033**

* USD Per STG

** European Opening @ 8:00 a.m. GMT

Source: Currency Interest Rates

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	5.12	5.25	5.25	5.51
Sterling Pound	10.43	10.51	10.16	10.12
Deutsche Mark	9.12	9.51	9.25	9.25
Swiss Franc	8.06	8.25	8.18	8.06
French Franc	8.93	9.09	9.15	9.21
Japanese Yen	6.53	6.28	5.96	5.62
European Currency Unit	9.56	9.75	9.75	9.75

Interest rate for 100 million U.S. Dollars 1.000.000 or equivalent

Previous Month

Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm
Gold	361.90	7.05	Silver	4.155	0.092

* 24 Hour Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.6850	0.6870
Sterling Pound	1.1811	1.1870
Deutsche Mark	0.4053	0.4073
Swiss Franc	0.4635	0.4655
French Franc	0.1190	0.1196
Japanese Yen	0.5268	0.5294
Dutch Guilder	0.3598	0.3616
Swedish Krona	0.1171	0.1177
Italian Lira	0.0542	0.0545
Belgian Franc	0.01971	0.01981

* Per 100

Other Currencies

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.787	1.797
Lebanese Lira	0.0774	0.0777
Saudi Riyal	0.1824	0.1834
Kuwaiti Dinar	-	-
Qatari Riyal	0.1858	0.1868
Egyptian Pound	0.2050	0.2180
Omani Riyal	1.754	1.764
UAE Dirham	0.1858	0.1868
Greek Drachma	0.3698	0.3798
Cypriot Pound	1.4550	1.4650

CAB Indices for Amman Financial Markets

Index	9/10/91	Close	16/10/91	Close
All-Share	122.01		123.06	
Banking Sector	125.10		104.21	
Insurance Sector	125.10		125.56	
Industry Sector	150.61		151.56	
Services Sector	130.10		131.55	

December 31, 1990 = 100

British jobless total nears 2.5 million

LONDON (Agencies) — Britain's jobless total climbed close to 2.5 million for the first time in three years last month but the slower than expected rise provided some comfort for a government fighting recession.

Seasonally-adjusted unemployment rose by 35,700 in September to reach 2.46 million or 8.7 per cent of the workforce. It was the smallest monthly increase in almost a year.

The government acknowledges that any improvement in unemployment figures will lag behind the economic recovery which it says is just starting to get under way.

But Employment Secretary Michael Howard welcomed the figures, which were much lower than economists had forecast.

"There are now unmistakable signs of the end of the recession," he said.

Economists said the figures were encouraging but would not give much of a boost to recovery hopes.

"The government can take some heart from the latest figures but the outlook for unemployment remains grim," said Ruth Lea, chief economist at Mitsubishi Bank in London.

She said unemployment was likely to keep rising well into next year. The green shoots of economic recovery are still looking pretty frostbitten.

Government officials said the lower than expected rise was hard to explain and they were cautious about reading too much into the figures. But they hoped that the worst was over.

Other figures showed that average earnings rose by a higher than expected 7.75 per cent in the year to August.

The opposition Labour Party said the data showed that Britain was paying an "appalling price."

Algeria asks to join GATT

ALGIERS (R) — Algeria has applied for admission to GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), the minister with special responsibility for commerce, Ahmad Fodil Bey, has said.

The minister also told a seminar in Algiers that the government planned new codes on trade, fiscal matters and customs tariffs.

Primary materials being imported would be subject to low tariffs, he said, adding that the number of different tariffs would be cut from 19 — ranging from nil to 20 per cent tax — to nine, with the tax rates ranging from nil to 42 per cent, the Algerian news agency said.

recapturing much of Thursday's losses. Its yield fell to 7.96 per cent from 8.02 per cent.

Bond prices go up when interest rates go down, a factor that makes stocks more attractive investments at that time.

Market watchers said better-than-expected earnings reports helped spur the advance in the stock market.

"There's a focus on earnings and most are being viewed in a positive light," one trader said.

While some companies have reported weak results, there was a growing consensus on Wall Street that corporate America may have the brunt of the recession behind it. This has buoyed sentiment and attracted investors to stocks.

"Some of the companies that have really suffered seem to be looking like maybe things are turning in the next quarter or two," said Peter Hagerman, chief executive officer at Hallmark Capital Management.

He said the stock market has also been rising on hopes that President George Bush might attempt to stimulate the economy by proposing a tax package that includes a capital gains cut, a move he has long sought.

French unemployment chiefs become jobless

PARIS (R) — The two latest casualties of France's rising tide of unemployment were the bearers of the bad news themselves.

Joining the ranks of the record 2.7 million jobless Friday were the chairman and managing director of the state employment agency, ANPE, which compiles unemployment statistics.

Employment Minister Martine Aubry sacked ANPE Managing Director Jean Marimbert Thursday night and Chairman Jean Bormard resigned in protest Friday.

Finance Minister Pierre Bérégovoy accused the ANPE this week of being little more than an out-of-date record-keeping machine producing "debatable statistics."

With unemployment proving a severe drag on the government's popularity, Mr. Aubry wants the ANPE to be more active in its role of putting the jobless in touch with employers and to weed out more benefit cheats.

Romania finds 'no gas' to refill for reform trip

BANGKOK (R) — Romania's economic reforms have been hit by the failure of rich countries to deliver promised aid, National Bank Governor Mugur Isarescu has said.

Reforms have not only been running according to plan, winning praise from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), but have been accelerated, Mr. Isarescu said.

However, the reform programme had been built on the assumption of substantial foreign financial aid.

"It's crucial not only to have money but to have promised money at the due time," Mr. Isarescu said.

The IMF's policy-making Interim Committee had called for "adequate and timely financing" to back adjustment, he said.

"We started on this trip with a half-full tank, expecting we could fill up with fuel on the way now and again. We pushed on the accelerator, and when we reached the first fuel station there was a sign saying 'no gas,'" he said.

Mr. Isarescu said the Romanian government and parliament remained committed to economic reform, despite the recent riots led by coalminers.

The miners, whose rampage forced Mr. Isarescu to call off a major reform, internal convertibility for Romania's currency, the leu, and a single exchange rate, were protesting against huge price rises and the prospect of massive unemployment.

The economy was indeed performing worse than had been assumed under the IMF-approved reforms, Mr. Isarescu said.

Instead of expected zero growth this year, the economy would shrink by five to 10 per cent.

Inflation, expected to run at 120 per cent because of price liberalisation, would be nearer 160 or 200 per cent. Gross currency reserves, targeted at \$700 million, were only \$30 million.

That was due to the collapse of Romania's Soviet and eastern

Europe export markets and lack of foreign funding.

"The IMF programme is on track but the economy is off track," he said.

Uncertainty after September's miners' riots led the World Bank to suspend a planned loan, threatening to further disrupt Group of 24 funding as Japan's contribution was tied to that credit.

Talks on the World Bank loan are to resume in November.

Mr. Isarescu said the reforms had been based on two pillars — \$1 billion from the IMF, which was being paid out on schedule, and \$1 billion from the Group of 24, which was not.

Romania now expects to receive a maximum of only \$300 million of Group of 24 money this year.

It had a \$200 million bridging loan from the Bank for International Settlements in September in advance of the first European Community (EC) payment, expected now in November instead of April as promised.

The EC has been delaying payments because it wants other Group of 24 members, principally the United States, to contribute.

Washington has been holding off because it doubts the democratic credentials of the Romanian authorities.

Mr. Isarescu said he had raised the issue with U.S. officials, who listened sympathetically and promised to consider Romania's emergency food needs.

Because of the rainy summer and problems in land reform, agricultural production would not cover domestic needs this year and Romania would need \$200 million to \$300 million to buy wheat and potatoes, Mr. Isarescu said.

"I expect because of the hardships and the burden of the September events there will be some modification of the process of adjustment," he said.

Unemployment in EC rises

LUXEMBOURG (AP) — The rate of unemployment in the 12 European Community countries rose to 8.9 per cent in August from 8.8 per cent in July, the EC reported Friday.

It was 8.4 per cent in August 1990.

Germany, excluding former East Germany, was the only country where unemployment fell last August, dropping to 4.6 per cent from 4.7 per cent in July.

Denmark's unemployment rose the most, jumping from 8.1 per cent in July to 8.5 per cent in August.

Officials with the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and the Group of Seven leading industrialised countries have said any major aid to the Soviet Union was contingent on the signing of the economic union treaty and the institution of market-oriented reform.

But Mr. Yeltsin cautioned that many elements remain unresolved.

"We should not let this signing, and a glass of champagne, turn our heads," the Russian Federation president said.

Israel angered by U.S. doubts over credit rating

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel, needing vast loans to provide homes, jobs and services for an influx of Soviet Jews, is hitting back at suggestions from Washington that its ability to repay them may be in doubt.

"These articles... give Israel a black eye just when we need more than ever to attract foreign investors," says Amos Rubin, economic adviser to Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, after recent press reports of critical official studies in the United States.

U.S. newspapers have reported that government studies of Israel's creditworthiness showed it might not be able to repay its growing debt on time without drastic economic reforms.

The studies, by the U.S. Export-Import Bank and Congressional Research Service, reflect long-standing U.S. concern that Israel has not introduced market reforms to an economy heaped with high inflation, high debt and heavy government intervention.

With relations with Washington on a raw edge over arrangements for a proposed Middle East peace conference, columnist Sever Plotzker in Yediot Ahronoth, Israel's largest circulation daily, laid the blame on the White House.

"A smear campaign against Israel's economy is being conducted in the American media," he wrote. "The source of the inspiration... is one of the situa-

tion rooms of the White House."

Israel's anger is intense because the official studies could bear on Israel's request for \$10 billion in loan guarantees from the American government.

President George Bush blocked consideration of the loan guarantees for 120 days in September, saying approval could hamper efforts to convene a Middle East peace conference.

Israel failed to muster enough support in Congress, normally a powerful ally, to override Mr. Bush's threatened veto.

Though Israel says its debt repayment record is perfect, since 1975 Washington has given an annual grant of \$1.2 billion to service the debt. The Congressional Research Service (CRS) notes that the total debt has increased rapidly in recent years.

The CRS report said Israel manages its foreign debt and annual budget deficit through increasing levels of foreign aid and Jewish philanthropy.

Israel has received more than \$50 billion in U.S. aid since 1949 — \$3 billion in military and economic grants annually since 1985.

"A proposed \$10 billion increase in external debt over the next five years for the purpose of financing immigration costs would, however, alone increase Israel's external debt by some what over 40 per cent," the CRS report said.

The \$10 billion Israel hopes to borrow at favourable rates with

U.S. guarantees is only part of what is needed to absorb an expected million immigrants by 1995.

Israeli officials put the total cost at \$50 billion — \$20 to \$30 billion in loans from foreign banks.

The CRS said servicing rising debt would be more difficult unless jobs were found for immigrants. Unemployment, up from six to 10 per cent in two years, is forecast to rise further as Israel struggles to create hundreds of thousands of jobs.

Avi Ben Bassat, director of research at the central bank, insisted Israel would be able to repay the loans because funds would go to create employment and economic growth.

Mr. Bassat also said the government had made reforms, reducing barriers to trade, relaxing foreign exchange controls, moving to deregulate capital markets and starting to privatise.

However, he acknowledged Israel had moved slowly on some important reforms. The state role in the economy has actually risen as spending on immigrants climbs.

If the United States refuses loan guarantees when they come up for congressional approval in January, or serious questions are raised about Israel's ability to repay debts, it could make it difficult for Israel to obtain other foreign aid.

New pact sets up Soviet economic links

MOSCOW (AP) — Boris Yeltsin and seven other republic chiefs have joined Mikhail Gorbachev in a new economic union and now face the starker task of forging political ties on the ruins of the old Soviet system.

They gathered in the Kremlin's ornate St. George's Hall Friday for an elaborate signing ceremony that included champagne toasts and a collective news conference.

The treaty, a product of months of debate, will create a "single economic zone" encompassing most of the Soviet Union. It will take effect once ratified by the republics' parliaments, probably within a few weeks.

"It's as if our ship was tossed by a storm and now we can feel firm ground," Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev said after the signing.

The treaty calls for a coordinated monetary and banking system, customs rules and tariffs, and cooperation in the fields such as energy, transportation and communications. Last-minute changes demanded by Mr. Yeltsin will let republics introduce their own currencies.

The central government will be prohibited from running a deficit, levying taxes or interfering "in the economic activity of enterprises."

Officials with the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and the Group of Seven leading industrialised countries have said any major aid to the Soviet Union was contingent on the signing of the economic union treaty and the institution of market-oriented reform.

But Mr. Yeltsin cautioned that many elements remain unresolved.

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Canadian banks cut prime rate

TORONTO (R) — Major Canadian banks slashed their prime lending rates to nine per cent Friday as high unemployment and battered consumer confidence continued to plague economic recovery.

The Royal Bank of Canada led the cuts, dropping its prime from 9.5 per cent. All other major Canadian banks quickly followed except for the Bank of Montreal, which had cut its prime rate last week.

The prime rate, which banks charge their best customers, is now at its lowest level since 1987.

Meanwhile, Statistics Canada, a government agency, reported that Canada's inflation rate fell to 5.4 per cent from 5.8 per cent.

Economists, who cite the slowdown in inflation as one of the incentives for interest rate drops, expect the inflation rate to fall to three per cent by next February.

They said the banks also may have eased in response to high unemployment, which is above 10 per cent, and reports that Canada's three-month-old recovery has begun to falter.

Despite a surge in business activity in the early summer, which boosted growth to an annual rate of 4.9 per cent in the second quarter and officially pulled Canada out of a year of recession, the economy now shows signs of widespread weakness.

Some economists say Canada's economic output may start to fall again in the third quarter after only a quarter of recovery, creating a "double-dip" recession.

"The economy is still very weak," said Andrew Fyle, economist at MMS International.

Wall Street stocks end week at record high

NEW YORK (R) — Four years after their worst crash in history Wall Street stocks ended at record highs Friday, propelled by corporate earnings reports that were slightly better than expected and lower interest rates.

The Dow Jones industrial average closed up 24.15 points at 3,077.15, topping the prior record set Wednesday.

Nearly four years ago to the day, the 30-stock index had its darkest day, plunging 506 points to 1,738.74 on Oct. 19, 1987.

Volume was brisk at 204 million shares on the New York Stock Exchange, with advancing issues edging decliners 875 to 724.

The average share gained six U.S. cents.

The upswing was also fuelled by a rebound in bond prices after Thursday's freefall on disappointment that the Federal Reserve, the U.S. central bank, did not lower interest rates.

"The rally was cut short yesterday (Thursday) because of the sharp drop in bond prices," said Robert Walberg, equity analyst at MSS International. The Dow index lost 8.72 points Thursday.

"When the bond market turned around, that allowed stocks to resume the rally."

But Friday, the benchmark 30-year bond gained 23/32 of a point,

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Yugoslav defence minister orders ceasefire

Relief convoy hits mine while evacuating Vukovar wounded

ZAGREB (Agencies) — Two nurses were badly wounded Saturday when an international relief convoy hit a landmine evacuating over 100 injured people from the besieged Croatian town of Vukovar.

It was the first convoy to evacuate wounded from the town since the Serb-led Yugoslav army began a siege of Vukovar in north-east Croatia almost two months ago.

"Two of our nurses were seriously injured," said Anne-Marie Huby, spokeswoman for the convoy organised by the international humanitarian group Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF).

Ms. Huby would not give names or details of the wounded nurses until their families had been informed. The aid group said earlier most of those in the 12 vehicle relief convoy were Belgian or Dutch.

"One truck carrying wounded ran over a mine and the nurses were wounded," she said. The convoy was now under federal army escort and heading to Pet-

rovci, eight kilometres south of Vukovar. Ms. Huby is in contact with the convoy by radio.

The relief convoy entered the besieged Croatian city of Vukovar Saturday and evacuated the most seriously wounded, as Yugoslavia's 10th ceasefire held tenuously.

Federal Defence Minister Veljko Kadijevic ordered all army troops to cease fire on the territory of Croatia as of noon (1100 GMT) Saturday in accordance with a truce agreement reached Friday under European community (EC) auspices. The brief order was published by the Yugoslav News Agency Tanjug.

However, a spokeswoman for Medecins Sans Frontieres, aid mortar shells rained down around the convoy for 30 minutes, beginning at noon, as it prepared to leave the city.

Gen. Kadijevic signed three similar ceasefire orders following previous truce agreements. It was not clear just how much effect his latest would have on the fighters, particularly Serbian loyalists in

Croatia who have been fighting, with army backing, to prevent the republic from gaining independence.

The convoy of five doctors, eight nurses and other MSF workers, escorted by two EC monitor vehicles, arrived in the embattled Croatian stronghold on the border with rival Serbia at 10 a.m. (0900 GMT).

It left about 1 1/2 hours later, carrying about 109 of those who needed "absolute intensive medical care," Joane Sotirich, an MSF coordinator from Greece told reporters gathered in a village just west of Vukovar, where a field hospital had been set up.

She said the convoy was "in great danger" as it left Vukovar. It must pass through Vinkovci, to the southwest en route to the hospital, and Western journalists returning from the city said there was heavy shelling around 1:15 p.m. (1215 GMT).

"We strictly urge both sides to cease fire because this convoy has nothing at all to do with politics," Ms. Sotirich said. "We are just

trying to evacuate people in a dangerous situation."

The group had planned a second trip into Vukovar Saturday afternoon, but the spokeswoman said, "under these conditions I don't think there'll be a second rescue mission today."

Vukovar officials had said earlier the convoy was expected to return to the city also Sunday. An MSF statement quoted the director of Vukovar's hospital as saying more than 300 wounded people were in the facility, with more casualties arriving daily because of heavy shelling.

Ms. Sotirich said she did not know who was firing on Vukovar during the convoy's mission. Earlier, Croatian defence officials in the city told the associated press that while army guns were silent, Serbian loyalists were still firing. The federal army has limited control over the Serb fighters.

Croatian military officials said later the convoy had been stopped about 12 kilometres outside Vukovar by federal forces who were searching the vehicles.



Boris Yeltsin

Yeltsin vetoes Russian law on local elections

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin Friday vetoed a law that established early local elections, saying the voting would paralyse the new administrators he has appointed to push home reforms across the huge republic.

A dispute over the elections was one of the issues that caused squabbling in Mr. Yeltsin's government for the past month, slowing the momentum of efforts to move towards a free-market economy.

Sergei Shakhrai, an ardent Yeltsin loyalist, resigned Friday as chairman of the Legislation Committee and member of the Russian Supreme Soviet President, which last week approved a law setting a Dec. 8 date to elect administrators of cities, districts, regions and territories within Russia.

Mr. Shakhrai quit because the law would have left Mr. Yeltsin "without firm executive power in regions of the republic," said Mr. Shakhrai's aide, Konstantin Yeliseyev, in an interview.

Mr. Yeltsin has appointed a network of hand-picked administrators over the past year to circumvent hardline Communist officials who were ignoring or thwarting his orders.

Although lawmakers gave him the power to appoint the officials, critics in the Russian legislature and elsewhere now call the network undemocratic. Mr. Yeltsin says it's still needed to implement his reforms.

Mr. Yeltsin had asked the legislature to repeal the law, saying the newly elected officials would be in conflict with his appointees.

"This will aggravate the crisis still further, and lead to a paralysis of power," Mr. Yeltsin said Thursday, according to the independent news agency Interfax.

Mr. Yeltsin proposed holding the elections next spring, with previously scheduled Russian parliamentary elections.

But the legislature rejected the appeal Friday. In response, Mr. Shakhrai quit and Mr. Yeltsin later signed the law, according to Russian Television and the government-run Russia Information Agency.

Meanwhile, a senior Communist Party official has committed suicide by jumping from the balcony of his flat — the third to plunge to his death since the failed August coup against President Mikhail Gorbachev.

Dmitry Lisovskiy, 54, a former official of the Party's Central Committee, died after jumping from the balcony of his 12th-floor apartment, Soviet News Agency (TASS) said Friday.

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

Moscow power station fire put out

MOSCOW (R) — Fire broke out in a generator at a Moscow power station early Saturday morning, but a spokesman for the city fire brigade said it was put out in an hour and there were no casualties. The generator, one of six, was out of action and would have to be replaced, duty officer Alexander Groshikov said. But the power station, one Tretya Khorochevskaya Street in the north-west of the city, should be back in action shortly. "The supply of electricity was not affected, because there is a network for supplying users," he said. The fire broke out in some lubricating oil which leaked from the generator through a mechanical failure. "I would say it was not very serious," Mr. Groshikov said. The Soviet News Agency TASS, quoted by Radio Russia, had said earlier that the fire might have "serious consequences."

Zaire premier locked out of office

KINSHASA (R) — Armed troops loyal to Zaire's strongman President Mobutu Sese Seko barred opposition Prime Minister Etienne Tshisekedi from entering his office Saturday, witnesses said. The latest power struggle between the two arch-foes came the day after a spokesman for Mr. Mobutu declared that Mr. Tshisekedi's government formed Monday night was illegal because the prime minister had struck out key parts of his investiture document. A defiant Mr. Tshisekedi pleaded with the civil guardsmen to let him into the prime minister's office. When that failed he sat down in a nearby grassy area and said he would meet his cabinet there later in the day. "I will stay here as long as I want," said the 58-year-old lawyer and longtime opponent of Mr. Mobutu. "I will stay here until 4 p.m. (1500 GMT) to hold a meeting with my ministers. You should not obey orders from a thief," Mr. Tshisekedi told the 50 or so guardsmen who barred his way to the prime minister's office in a residential area of the capital.

Miyazawa, foes launch campaign

TOKYO (AP) — Kiichi Miyazawa, who is expected to be chosen Japan's next prime minister, and two other candidates began a weeklong official campaign Saturday for the governing party's presidency. The president of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which has led Japan's government for 36 years, also serves as prime minister because the party holds a majority in the powerful lower house of parliament. The campaign and the party election on Oct. 27 are expected to be largely ceremonial since Mr. Miyazawa, a 72-year-old former deputy prime minister, has the support of the party's largest faction and two other factional groups. Toshiki Kaifu, the 60-year-old popular prime minister who was denied another two-year term by Liberal Democratic powerbrokers early this month, leaves office on Oct. 30.

North Sea oil rig reconnected to tug

ABERDEEN, Scotland (R) — An oil rig adrift in the North Sea since fierce storms Friday was brought under control Saturday. Coastguards said the Borgey Dolphin, operated by Teteco and with 19 men aboard to carry out essential duties, had been reconnected to its towing vessel the far cruiser. "The rig is now headed into wind and under command," they said. Earlier Saturday it had been drifting east of the Shetland Islands off the Scottish coast as the weather improved. Sixty-one non-essential workers were airlifted from the rig Friday when it was wrenched away from its towing vessel taking it from a Norwegian oil field to the Strathpey Field. By Saturday the violent storms had abated to 50 mph (80 kph) winds and seas of up to nine metres.

Democrat drops from presidential race

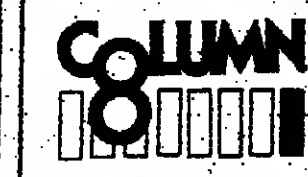
WASHINGTON (R) — One Democrat who was eyeing a try for the presidency — Oklahoma Representative Dave McCurdy — dropped his bid Friday while the political focus shifted again to reluctant New York Governor Mario Cuomo, a man who won't say "no" to talk he might run. Mr. McCurdy, 41, chairman of the House of Representatives Intelligence Committee, said in Oklahoma City he would not join other contenders for the Democratic presidential nod. He said he had to choose between being an effective congressman, committee chairman and father to his three children and being away campaigning. "I have made these choices and therefore I am announcing today that I will not seek the 1992 Democratic presidential nomination," he said.

Thomas sworn in to Supreme Court

WASHINGTON (R) — Clarence Thomas joined the U.S. Supreme Court Friday in an elaborate swearing-in ceremony on the White House lawn, saying the bitter battle over his confirmation had made him a better person. Thomas, 43, held one hand up and put the other on a Bible as he took the oath from Supreme Court Justice Byron White with President George Bush and about 1,000 relatives, friends and officials looking on in warm sunshine. "Clarence Thomas has endured America at its worst, and he's answered with America at its best. He brings that hard-won experience to the high court, and American will be the better for it," Mr. Bush told the crowd.

Peru Senate strips Garcia's immunity

LIMA, Peru (R) — Former Peruvian President Alan Garcia, accused of enriching himself in office and having links to the scandal-plagued Bank of Credit and Commerce International, was stripped of his parliamentary immunity early Saturday. In a historic vote which followed 22 hours of debate, the Senate voted 38-17 to lift the immunity Mr. Garcia enjoys as a senator for life. Two senators abstained. Mr. Garcia, a 42-year-old Social Democrat, became the first president in Peru's modern history to face possible criminal charges. The vote was based on findings by a Senate commission that Mr. Garcia enriched himself by about \$400,000 during 14 years as a public servant.



Tanks return to Moscow — this time for a film

MOSCOW (R) — Tanks surrounded the building of the Russian Parliament Friday raising fears among some patriots-by of a repetition of August's failed coup. But this time the army was there just to make a film. Twelve tanks and eight armoured personnel carriers were allocated by Moscow military authorities after Russian Vice President Alexander Rutskoi sanctioned shooting of a film on the coup by the local Sokrat Film Studio. TASS news agency said. Tanks moved on the parliament building — centre of opposition to the hardline emergency committee — several times during the August coup. But they never attacked. The coup has stirred creative activity beyond the film industry.

Kids view hard-porn videos in N. Zealand school library

WELLINGTON (R) — Children at a New Zealand primary school discovered that supposedly educational video cassettes in the library were hard pornography. Outraged parents are demanding that headmaster Jeff Brown resign after a group of 16 children aged nine to 13 watched hard pornography, with scenes including orgies, anal sex and lesbianism. The tapes, discovered next to children's videos at Washdyke School, near Timaru in New Zealand's South Island, were viewed without a teacher present, the parents said. Brown was on sick leave and could not be contacted.

Mahathir says BBC 'a bit racist'

KUALA LUMPUR (R) — Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, attending the Commonwealth summit in Harare, was quoted in local newspapers as saying the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) was "a bit racist" on the issue of good government. Mr. Mahathir, who was interviewed by the BBC at the summit, said the BBC had named Malaysia among Commonwealth countries which lacked good governance. "They felt that unless we clean up our act, we should not be in the government," Mr. Mahathir told Malaysian journalists covering the summit. "I felt that was a bit racist on the part of the BBC," Mr. Mahathir said. The BBC had singled out Malaysia as one of several countries which had laws to detain people without trial. "I did not think this is a British law we adopted."

Woman finds heroin in auctioned suitcase

FRANKFURT (R) — A German housewife who bought a suitcase at an auction for unclaimed airline luggage ended up taking home about 400,000 marks (\$235,000) worth of heroin. Frankfurt police said Thursday the woman had tried to do her laundry with the contents of a washing powder carton she found in the case. The carton contained four plastic packets holding a total of two kilograms of a powder, later identified as heroin. Police said they did not know how much the woman paid for the suitcase.

At \$1,000, no one expects this book to be bestseller

NEW YORK (R) — Even for an art book this two-volume set is spectacular — beautifully printed photographs of the painstaking restoration of Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel ceiling. But the publishers say they do not expect it to be a bestseller and would be satisfied selling 2,500 copies. At \$1,000 a set that wish is understandable. "The Sistine Chapel" published this week by Alfred A. Knopf, is believed to be the most expensive general trade art book ever published. No second printing is planned and there will not be a paperback edition. The lavishly produced two-volume book is published by Knopf in connection with Nippon Television, underwriters of the restoration project, who get part of the profits from the book's sale. Susan Ralston, the Knopf editor who oversaw U.S. production of the book, says no expense was spared in its manufacture — from a binding of hand-sewn Italian linen to the heaviest paper ever used in an art book. Many of the more than 700 photographs taken by Takashi Okamura open up in gatefolds up to four feet (more than a metre) long.

Cambodian Communist Party adopts multi-party system, market economy

BANGKOK (AP) — Cambodia became the first country in Indochina to adopt a multi-party system as the ruling Communists issued a liberal platform to guide their troubled country's future, reports from Phnom Penh said Saturday.

The Kyodo News Agency said a 17-page party platform decided upon Friday calls for liberal democratic government, a free-market economy and respect for human rights. It adopts Buddhism as the state religion.

The policies were approved by more than 320 delegates on the closing day of an extraordinary party congress in the Cambodian capital.

Vietnam and Laos, the two other Indochinese nations, have embarked on significant economic reforms but their Communist parties have refused to give up their monopolies on political power.

The Cambodian party also removed its longtime chief, Heng Samrin, and changed its name to expunge allusions to communism. The moves appeared aimed at garnering popular support in adv-

ance of a peace pact and general elections in the war-ravaged nation.

The Cambodia News Agency (SPE), monitored in Bangkok, said Heng Samrin, who led the party since 1981, was replaced as general secretary by veteran revolutionary Chea Sim. The People's Revolutionary Party of Kampuchea changed its name to the Cambodian People's Party.

According to the Kyodo report, the platform also calls for direct and secret balloting to choose the head of the nation and the parliament, guarantees protection for the property of refugees and Cambodians returning from overseas and abolishes the death penalty.

The platform, adopted by the party's Central Committee earlier this month, states that Cambodia will not enter into foreign alliances, that might jeopardise its neutrality.

Heng Samrin, installed in power by the Vietnamese 12 years ago, was relegated to the honorary position of president of the Central Committee.

He has been a figurehead and decisions in recent years were

increasingly made by Prime Minister Hun Sen, Mr. Chea Sim and a small number of other party and state leaders.

Regarded as a pragmatist, Mr. Hun Sen was elected vice president of the Central Committee, according to a partial transcript of the congress communiqué.

The congress precedes the signing in Paris next week of a peace agreement among Cambodia's warring factions and the return to Phnom Penh next month of one-time head of state Prince Norodom Sihanouk.

If elections are held as the peace pact outlines, the Cambodian People's Party will be vying for votes with other political groupings. And it will be severely handicapped.

Mr. Heng Samrin, Mr. Hun Sen and Mr. Chea Sim all fought with the widely detested Khmer Rouge and then were regarded by some as "puppets" of Cambodia's traditional enemy — Vietnam.

After the brutal rule of the Communist Khmer Rouge in the mid-1970s, most Cambodians instinctively detect anything smacking of communism.

S. Africa accuses ANC of violating peace pacts

JOHANNESBURG (R) — Police Friday accused the African National Congress (ANC) and its army of violating peace agreements with the government, that were aimed at ending political violence.

Since the ANC agreed in August 1990 to suspend its armed struggle, there have been 44 violations of peace pacts that have led to 14 deaths, said a statement from National Police Headquarters in Pretoria.

The statement was likely to further strain the ANC's tense relationship with the police and President F.W. de Klerk. The ANC accuses police of not doing enough to stop violence in black townships and of siding with the rival Inkatha Freedom Party in clashes.

Mr. De Klerk denies the allegations. In a statement Friday unrelated to the police allegations, he called claims of police bias "unjustifiable, unfounded and unjustifiable" and said nearly 6,000 people had been arrested this year for involvement in unrest.

The ANC suspended its 30-year guerrilla war to clear the way for talks with the white-minority government on ending apartheid but wants and end to the violence before those talks begin. It says it has not staged any attacks since the August 1990 agreement but acknowledges the continued recruitment and training of soldiers.

The police statement gave few details but said 65 members of Spear of the Nation, the ANC's armed wing, had been arrested in connection with the alleged violations. Some said they had trained recruits in the use of firearms, grenades and limpet mines, it said.

The recruits were to serve in self-defence units in black townships.

ANC lauds phasing out of sanctions

JOHANNESBURG (R) — Nelson Mandela's African National Congress (ANC) welcomed Friday's Commonwealth decision to phase out anti-apartheid sanctions, but South African business leaders urged an immediate end to all curbs.

ANC spokeswoman Gill Marcus said the unanimous agreement of the Commonwealth leaders was in keeping with the anti-apartheid movement's recommendations to the 50-nation grouping of Britain and its former colonies, meeting this week in Harare.

"We hope this (decision) will ensure progress politically. What is important to us is that major sanctions remain in place and in keeping with the political process," Ms. Marcus said.

There was no immediate reaction from President F.W. De Klerk whose programme of apartheid reform has raised hopes of a transition to majority rule and an end to Pretoria's political and economic isolation.

The South African Chamber of Business hailed the decision to lift so-called "people-to-people" sanctions immediately, but urged faster action to end trade and investment curbs.

"The political progress which the Commonwealth is keen to see in South Africa requires to be underpinned by rapid economic growth and full participation by South Africa in the international economy," the chamber said in a statement.

The chamber said it was vital to fight unemployment, which is unofficially estimated at over seven million or about 40 per cent of the economically active population.

The giant Anglo American Corporation also welcomed the Commonwealth decision and urged quicker action on trade.

French group paints grim picture of China

PEKING (R) — A team of French law experts Saturday gave a grim assessment of human rights in China, saying that legal reforms launched before Peking's 1989 crackdown on pro-democracy unrest were now "deadlocked."

The group said police in China had overwhelming powers, judges were controlled by the hardline Communist leadership and it was virtually impossible to enter a plea of "not guilty."

"We would call upon the human rights commission in Geneva to monitor the way human rights is implemented in this country very closely," said Alain Girardet, a Paris court of appeals judge.

The team of five legal experts headed by Paul Bouchet, a member of France's State Council, ended a week's visit Saturday saying they had been frustrated at every turn by Chinese officials.

However, they had sensed a wide yearning for greater liberty in private contacts with Chinese lawyers. "There seems to be a great

longing in this country for freedom and liberty. A great desire for the respect of human rights."

Mr. Bouchet, who also heads France's Consultative Commission on Human Rights, told a news conference.

The French group was one of the few specifically concerned with human rights that Peking has permitted since 1989. The visit was made under an agreement worked out by French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas during a trip to China in April.

The lawyers toured Peking's number one prison, which is often put on show for foreigners, as well as a youth detention centre in the central city of Chengdu. They also met the justice minister and other legal officials, although, like other human rights groups, they were denied access to leading political prisoners.

Mr. Bouchet said the group found Peking unbending in its determination to isolate political prisoners. He said tentative steps, launched before the 1989 crackdown, to free the judiciary from

political control were now stopped dead.

New draft laws to give greater freedom and guarantees to judges and lawyers had been shelved indefinitely, while a 1990 law aimed at expanding the rights of the accused was not being applied, he said.

"As a result of the 1989 events, the reform process has become deadlocked," Mr. Bouchet said. During its heyday of economic and political reform in the 1980s, China struggled to set up a legal framework after the chaos of the radical Cultural Revolution in the 1960s and 70s.

The French delegation said that China's courts, lawyers and judges had been brought back firmly under control by the Communist ideologues who seized power after troops put down pro-democracy protests in Peking in June, 1989.

Thousands of people, including students and intellectuals, were rounded up. Many were summarily tried, and some remain in prison. "The legal consequences of

these events might nullify the efforts to bring rule of law to govern the country," said Jean-Pierre Mignard, a Paris lawyer. "No real independence is possible for judges or lawyers," Girardet said. "About 70 per cent of their judges have no legal training at all."

The group described the power of China's public security apparatus as "overwhelming" and said a system of vetting pleas before trials makes it almost impossible for lawyers to enter a not guilty plea.

"The most they can do is plead insufficient evidence," said Christian Charniere-Bournez, a lawyer from Paris.

Mr. Bouchet said the group would make a public report upon its return to France, but added that he doubted the West could enter into a sustained dialogue with Peking on human rights under present conditions.

"For fruitful dialogue to continue, a number of conditions must be met which have not yet been met," he said.